

WAR IN AFGHANISTAN: IMPLICATIONS
FOR PAKISTAN ARMED FORCES

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirement for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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M.Sc., Defence Studies, Madras University, India, 1990


Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
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ABSTRACT

WAR IN AFGHANISTAN: IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN ARMED FORCES by Lt. Col
Jatinder Sikand, Indian Army, 107 pages.

The thesis establishes the fall-out of the Afghanistan war (1979-89) on Pakistan's armed forces (PAF) as it affected their role in domestic politics and military capability.

The study traces the background of the PAF till Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979). It traces out the efforts of the PAF to assert their position in national governance, acquire conventional weapons and initiate nuclear weapons program. It is established that the PAF did not have much success. Instead it suffered many reverses, including in the wars with India.

The examination of the fateful decade (till the Soviets left in 1989) indicate that the Afghanistan war diverted national and international attention from the ills of military rule in Pakistan. It helped the martial law regime to suppress the opposition and project its support of the Afghanistan mujahideen as a holy war. Pakistan's role in the conflict brought it large quantities of sophisticated weapons. Pakistan was able to disregard the non-proliferation goals of the USA and other Western nations and accelerate its nuclear weapons program.

The study concludes that as a result of the Afghanistan war, Pakistan modernized and strengthened its armed forces. It acquired nuclear weapons capability, enhancing its strategic equation in South Asia. In domestic politics, the PAF acquired de-facto veto over decisions of the civilian government in security related issues.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research Question

Did Pakistan's role as a front-line state against Soviet intervention in Afghanistan result in enhancing the political influence and military potential of its armed forces?

Background/Context Of The Problem

Towards the end of the nineteen seventies, the state of affairs did not look bright for Pakistan's military regime and its armed forces. It faced a US ban on military aid in 1978, as a punishment for its nuclear program (a very emotive issue in itself in the wake of Pakistan's military defeat in the 1971 war, and its desperate attempts to seek parity with India). Most countries were aghast at the illegitimacy of the court proceedings leading to the execution of former prime minister Z. A. Bhutto and suppression of democracy by the military regime.

In one heavenly stroke, the Soviet army marched into Afghanistan in December 1979 and Pakistan's fortunes speedily turned. The USA, with a history of vacillating foreign policy priorities in South Asia, panicked at the prospects of a Soviet march forward to the warm water ports of the Indian ocean. This magnified Pakistan's strategic importance to the USA and turned it overnight from an international rogue to good Samaritan.

Almost from the beginning, Pakistan's decision making apparatus was divided into two schools about the implications and the required response to the new situation. One group, led by the hierarchy of the Pakistani armed forces (PAF), saw the emergence of a serious potential threat from the Soviet forces in Afghanistan. They felt that Pakistan needed the support of another superpower (USA) to offset this threat. They also saw an opportunity to maximize Pakistan's political bargaining position with the Western countries.

The second group, notably including Pakistan's then foreign minister Agha Shahi (an enthusiast of Pakistan's non-aligned credentials), was not inclined to adopt a confrontational posture towards Soviet Union. They opposed entering into an overly close relationship with the US. They also believed that there was little possibility of the Soviets extending their operations into Pakistan due to logistics problems. As it happened, General Zia-ul-Haq, the military ruler of Pakistan at that time, accepted a role for Pakistan as a front-line state. This role lasted nearly a decade until the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in February 1989.

Basking in its new-found status, Pakistan envisioned gigantic economic and military aid, and boosting its sagging international reputation. It hoped to at last acquire the requisite muscle to settle old scores with India at some later stage. The extent to which Pakistan's expectations and calculations were fulfilled is a good indicator of its subsequent confidence/frustrations and resultant capabilities.

Events in South Asia after the Soviet withdrawal have demonstrated an increasing belligerence and confrontational attitudes between Pakistan and India. Since then, the two countries have, on more than one occasion, come close to another war. India has accused the PAF

of providing direct and indirect military assistance to the separatists in its North-Western state of Jammu and Kashmir, and warned of serious consequences. In response, Pakistan has shown increasing readiness to take on the challenge and even spoken of carrying the war to Indian territory in case of a conflict. This brings up a question about the source of this enhanced confidence of Pakistan and its armed forces, and the extent to which it could be attributed to the PAF's Afghanistan experience.

Delimitation's

While assessing the PAF's gains or losses accruing out of its role in the Afghanistan conflict, a number of independent and inter-related issues arise. The study of each is important in its own right to arrive at the overall impact. These possible areas of study are the PAF's military potential, its role in domestic politics and decision making, its alleged involvement in arms trafficking, corruption and the drug trade, its ability to face internal disorders and winds of separatism, and finally, its training, leadership and morale. Each field is exhaustive and a suitable topic for an independent study, something not possible within the realm of this research. Accordingly, in order to limit the scope of this effort, two aspects considered the most important have been selected for concentration. These are the PAF's role in domestic politics and its military potential, encompassing both the conventional and nuclear dimensions.

Significance Of The Study

The Indian sub-continent today is very near a potential flash-point. The region is considered among the five in the world where a major contingency can undermine regional stability and world peace. This study will address one of the principal actors in any potential

conflict, the PAF. It will determine the gains/losses which accrued from its involvement in the Afghanistan crisis. It will also make an assessment of the influence and capabilities of the PAF at the end of the conflict. These issues could have been the determining factors in the PAF's behavior in subsequent years.

The study may also prove useful in two regards. First, it will give an insight into the proxy war concept as it applied to a chain of relationship between the US, Pakistan, and the Afghanistan resistance fighters (mujahideen). If the experience proved useful, it may provide lessons for its application in other areas of conflict (regionally or globally). In fact, India now regularly accuses the PAF of applying the same methodology in training, arming, and logistically supporting the Kashmiri separatists as it used with the mujahideen. Second, the study may highlight for the USA and other major powers the efficacy of short-term regional policies, evolved in the face of conflicting foreign policy goals. The contradiction in the near and long-term goals may prompt the smaller nations around the world to exploit the situation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A large literature exists covering the developments in Afghanistan during the period 1979-1989. These reflect on the initial Marxist coup, entry of Soviet troops, international reaction to the intervention, covert and overt struggle by the Afghan resistance (mujahideen) groups--aided and abetted by outside support, diplomatic efforts to end the conflict--leading to the signing of the Geneva accord, and withdrawal of the Soviet troops. The available literature can be put into three categories. These are the clash of Soviet/US interests in the region and their respective response, the nature of the armed struggle by the mujahideen against the Soviet troops, and post-Geneva Peace Accord prospects for Afghanistan. However, it seems that there is no previous work existing on the specific issue of the gains and losses of the Pakistani Armed Forces (PAF) attributable to their role in the Afghanistan war.

The Red Army On Pakistan's Border: Policy Implications For The United States

This book is a compilation of four papers. The first by Anthony Arnold outlines Soviet threat to Pakistan following the invasion of Afghanistan. The author contends that the fundamental impulse was Soviet expansionist philosophy, but the use of military means was not considered desirable until forced on the USSR by the danger of losing all its preceding economic, political, and ideological investments in that country. Soviet policy towards Pakistan rested on three aims:

keeping up military pressure to discourage Pakistan from supporting the Afghan resistance, trying to wean Pakistan away from the US and China by threats and cajoling, and, finally, promoting the kind of benign neutrality in Pakistan enjoyed by the USSR in India and Finland.

In the second paper, Richard P. Cronin looks at Pakistani capabilities to meet the Soviet challenges. Pakistan fielded ten times as many troops as the Karmal regime and four times as many as the Soviets fielded in Afghanistan. So, despite a lack of strategic depth and the possibility of a two-front engagement with India and the Soviets on either side, it was clear that the PAF would hardly be a pushover for the Soviets.

The third paper, "India and Afghanistan" by Thomas Perry Thornton, highlights India's limited ability to influence the course of events in West Asia. In the last paper, "US Policy Towards Pakistan," the authors (also the editors) see that the principal US interests in the region (sanctity of the Persian Gulf) would have been best served by making Pakistan confident of "sufficient" friendship and support from the US, to prevent any yielding to the Soviets and development of their own nuclear weapon.

These papers are a useful source for understanding the rationale behind the policies adopted in Pakistan and the USA in response to Soviet challenge. However, there is a basic contradiction among them. They dwell at length on the limited Soviet capabilities in the region and extreme difficulties in sustaining operations in Afghanistan, let alone projecting them forward into Pakistan. At the same time, they project Pakistan as the next logical target for absorption into the Soviet empire after securing Afghanistan. The contradiction could have been reconciled if the authors had conclusively analyzed the probability and extent of Soviet threat to Pakistan.

Pakistan's Security Under Zia, 1977-1988:
The Policy Imperatives Of A
Peripheral Asian State

The book is a study by Robert G. Wirsing of Pakistan's security policies prior to and during Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. In detailed discussion of the Afghanistan war, and boundary disputes and the arms race with India, the author establishes linkages between the security policy decisions taken at that time and the country's frail domestic political order. The book makes an interesting point about the Soviet threat as perceived in Pakistan and possible underlying motives in its subsequent policies. The nature of Pakistan's strategic thinking in 1980 is highlighted by the findings of its inter-agency study of prevailing regional security environment. The study concluded that foreign occupation of Afghanistan would enhance Pakistan's security problems, but the future Soviet pressures in the region would be directed more against the South West rather than the South Asian area. It visualized Iran and not Pakistan as the principal focus of Soviet concern. It identified the Iranian port city of Chah Bahar on the Arabian sea as a more likely target of Soviet adventure rather than Pakistan's own Baluchistan coast. This theory is strengthened by the fact that in March 1979, almost a year following the Marxist takeover in Afghanistan and nine months prior to Soviet invasion, Pakistan had announced its withdrawal from Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in order to soften the edge of Soviet-Pakistani relations. Accordingly, the book raises the question, "Soviet threat or Western aid bonanza" as the underlying motive for Pakistan's military regime.

The second important issue discussed in the book is the arms race with India. The author contends that from 1977 to 1987, India's foreign arms imports were four times that of the PAF. Some of

Pakistan's policy decisions might have been influenced by a desire to narrow this gap. A related issue, however, is not addressed in any detail. It is the quality of the arms imported by the two sides: the high performance, technologically sophisticated Western arms procured by the PAF as against the less potent Soviet systems acquired by India. The real impact of the discrepancy in the arms imports would have been realized if a relative combat power ratio of the major weapon systems had also been worked out.

The Bear Trap: Afghanistan's Untold Story

Many speculative theories existed on the exact role played by Pakistan in the Afghanistan conflict and the support it received from the USA and other countries in these efforts. That matter has now been set in perspective with the publishing of this book in 1992 by Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf (retired, Pakistan Army). From 1983 to 1987, he was the head of the Afghanistan bureau of Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence (ISI), and judging from his account, de-facto Commander-in-Chief of the mujahideen. He has highlighted the role of ISI as a front-line agency of Pakistan's government and the PAF in controlling the flow of thousands of tons of arms across to its occupied neighbor, training the mujahideen in secret camps, and covertly sending PAF teams inside Afghanistan to assist the guerrillas in their ambushes, assassinations, raids, and rocket attacks.

The arms were bought from USA, Britain, China, Egypt, and Turkey with CIA and Saudi Arabian funds. During 1983, approximately 10,000 tons of arms and ammunition (mainly small arms, anti-tank and anti-aircraft rocket launchers and guns) were received and this figure rose to 65,000 tons in 1987. The author maintains that the ISI was absolutely honest in ensuring that arms provided by CIA were passed on

to the resistance groups and nothing was siphoned off for use of the PAF. The PAF performed a difficult job at great risk to their security. They did so without any underlying motives and did not particularly end up as beneficiaries of the war in their efforts to acquire modern weapons.

The book is extremely informative on the inner "wheeler-dealers" of the covert operations, tracing in detail the planning, preparation, and execution of special missions to "bleed the Soviets." However, the author repeatedly portrays his organization, the ISI, as dedicated and honest while he ridicules or shows in poor light all other actors in the struggle--Pakistani politicians, diplomats, the US government and CIA. The bias is obvious in some of the remarks and undermines its credibility as a first-hand account.

Pakistan And The War In Afghanistan

The author Robert G. Wirsing has concluded after his interviews with some of the mujahideen leaders in Peshawar in 1986, that up to 30 percent or more of the covert US aid might have been siphoned off by the Pakistani agencies. Also, the ISI was deliberately inducing disunity among the mujahideen groups in order to increase their dependency on the PAF. This would have resulted in fewer questions being asked about the manner of distribution of the weapons.

The author contends that despite initial successes against the Soviet troops, there was a general feeling of apprehension in Pakistan in 1986. The fears centered on the theme that the war's increasing spill-over into Pakistan might result in widening of the conflict. The mounting domestic unrest and lawlessness, attributed to the presence of three million Afghanistan refugees, might undo Pakistan's first tentative step back to civilian rule. The increase in America's

commitment to Pakistan since 1981 was still fragile and could not be relied upon. This suggests a common perception that continuation of the Afghanistan war was somehow productive only for the military regime in its struggle for political dominance against champions of democratization process.

Pakistan Under The Military: Eleven Years Of Zia-ul-Haq

This book by Shahid Javed Burki and Craig Baxter, provides a good insight into the political, economic, legal and administrative structures of Pakistan as they were formed and transformed during General Zia-ul-Haq's military rule. The authors analyze five reasons for Zia's political longevity (a regime that promised elections and handing over the power in ninety days but lasted for more than eleven years). These are safeguarding the social values of the middle class (which Zia considered to be his main constituency); sound economic management by a group of technocrats; extraordinary canniness displayed by Zia in keeping the loyalty of senior officers of the PAF; Soviet invasion of Afghanistan coupled with Zia's decision to challenge a superpower known for its resolve; and finally luck.

In addition, four central issues predominated during the fateful decade. These were the role of the PAF in the state, the nature and extent of federalism, the place of Islam in politics, and the balance of power between the president and the prime minister. The authors call the PAF the prime political force in the country and compare Pakistan to Bismarck's Prussia, a state within the army and not an army within a state. This may be an unkind reference to the political maturity and democratic aspirations of the people of Pakistan. Despite PAF's assertive role in shaping Pakistan's destiny and numerous coups followed by long periods of iron-handed rule, it has not been able to produce

lasting and relatively unchallenged spells of military rule as in Libya or Iraq. The PAF has always had to compromise and finally yield to the people's yearning for franchise. It is this counter-argument that the authors have not addressed in what otherwise is an elaborate account of Pakistan's political history and constitutional dilemmas.

Pakistan and Afghanistan - Resistance And Reconstruction

Marvin G. Weinbaum, in this book, brings out the impact of Afghanistan war on the delicate balance between the military, the democratic government and the opposition. According to the author, handling of the Afghanistan crisis, right from the outset, was considered a national security issue and hence dominated by military rather than diplomats. General Zia projected Pakistan's role in the conflict as akin to a holy war, to be supported at any domestic cost. In implementing this policy, the ISI also became a critical part of his political control (by running surveillance on domestic opposition groups and undermining them by giving political support to the politicians deemed more friendly).

After the departure of Zia from the scene in an airplane crash in August 1988, martial law was lifted and Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Benazir Bhutto was sworn in as the Prime Minister after a democratic election. The new leader had to show considerable deference to the military and allow it to assume nearly an exclusive responsibility in setting the course of the Afghanistan policy. Bhutto feared that otherwise the military would openly favor her political opposition, or worse still, directly intervene to undo her government. It appears that the author felt that the PAF had emerged more potent in the domestic arena than before as a result of the Afghanistan conflict.

The book does not elaborate on the nature of the PAF's influence on domestic political playing field. It is not clear whether the PAF could openly suppress the democratic institutions as practiced by Generals Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan or it had to be content with only an indirect (behind the scene) influence.

The United States And Pakistan: The Evolution
Of An Influence Relationship

The author, Shirin Tahir Kheli, devotes substantial space to trace the ups and downs of the US-Pakistan relationship. The Pakistani elite's obsessive preoccupation with India was regarded unsympathetically in Washington. With the US pursuing detente with the Soviets in early 1970s, the relationship withered. Once a key member of the US network of containment, Pakistan became the odd country out. The events in Iran and Afghanistan at the end of the seventies once again forced both capitals to redefine their relationship and promote complementary but not necessarily common security goals.

The author also dwells at length on the nuclear issue. She explains that Pakistan's nuclear quest was a direct result of the Indian explosion of 1974. Even at that time, Prime Minister Bhutto had pleaded with the Western countries to guarantee Pakistan's security, but to no avail. The implication is that had they done so, Pakistan would not have been compelled to respond by setting up its weapons program. The Carter Administration, rather than understanding and dealing with Pakistan's threat perceptions simply zeroed in on the nuclear proliferation issue. However, later in the chapter, while enumerating the US-Pakistani pulls and pressures during the Reagan era, she fails to address why Pakistan defiantly stuck to the development of nuclear weapons, risking international isolation, when the US was ready to spend billions of dollars to strengthen the PAF's conventional capability.

If it was only a Western guarantee of its security that Pakistan was looking for, logic would suggest that it should have worked to strengthen the already existing pacts like SEATO or CENTO, rather than withdrawing from them (from CENTO only nine months prior to Soviet invasion). The author also contends that the Afghanistan crisis notwithstanding, Pakistan would still have pursued the nuclear program. This is an acceptable presumption. However, whether the success would have been of the same magnitude is doubtful.

Summary Of The Literature

To summarize, the existing literature is divided in assessment of the extent of Soviet threat to Pakistan. The views range from the threat being a mere nuisance to the possibility of a full scale attack on Pakistan. The views are also divided on the compulsions and possible hidden agenda in Pakistan's military rulers decision to act as a conduit of Western arms for the mujahideen. Some have called it the result of necessity while others project it as an opportunity seized by the PAF to acquire Western arms, accelerate nuclear weapons program, and suppress the political opposition in the name of a holy war. There is no single, conclusive theory on the subject.

All in all, without the benefit of a single, focused study on the primary question, the research here will rely on the minor issues related to the PAF, covered by different authors in their studies of other major aspects of the Afghanistan war. These minor issues will then be collated and analyzed to arrive at the overall impact of the conflict on the PAF.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to answer the primary question and study the impact of the Afghanistan war on the PAF, a combination of "historical" and "comparative" approaches will be used. Three specific areas related to the military activity and capability of the PAF are identified to focus on for the research. These are, first, domination of domestic political system; second, expansion and modernization of conventional forces; and last, acquisition of nuclear weapons capability.

Specifically, two snapshots in time are chosen for a comparative study of the PAF. The first is at the beginning of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, and the second at the time of their withdrawal in February 1989. Historical data pertaining to the three study areas will be collected to assess the state of the PAF at each of the two snapshots. The first snapshot will relate to the period from independence to beginning of the Afghanistan conflict (1947-1979). The second snapshot will trace the events during the conflict (1979-1989). An analysis and comparison of the PAF in the three chosen areas at the end points of the snapshots will help assess the resultant gains and losses. An overall assessment will then help answer the primary question.

A historical perspective will be presented in Chapter IV to trace the efforts of the PAF till December 1979 to score in the three key areas. This will provide the first snapshot. Chapters V, VI

and VII will separately trace the historical events of the period of Afghanistan war (1979-89) and relate them to the PAF to arrive at the second snapshot. Chapter V will address the net influence that the military was exercising in politics and national governance at that time. The research will focus on answering the following questions:-

(a) Did the diversion of the nation's attention towards the Afghanistan war neutralize some of the existing and emerging challenges to military rule?

(b) Were the military rulers able to enhance their international acceptance because of the Afghanistan war?

(c) Was the military able to acquire a more stable, lasting and assertive role in political arena by the end of the conflict?

Only a positive answer to these questions will indicate that the PAF emerged politically stronger, with a greater influence over the national governing apparatus.

Chapter VI will focus on the state of modernization of the PAF at the end of the Afghanistan war. Once again, historical data will be collated to identify major sources of arms transfer during the struggle, important arms transfer policy changes by major suppliers as a consequence of the war and the effect of acquisition of high technology weapon systems on the capabilities of the PAF. A comparison with the first corresponding snapshot will highlight whether there were any significant gains as a result of the Afghanistan war.

In Chapter VII, events of the period 1979-89 will be traced in order to be able to determine whether Pakistan was able to pursue or accelerate its nuclear weapons program as a result of its involvement in the Afghanistan war. The research will focus on the available historical data to answer these questions:-

(a) Did Pakistan's role in the Afghanistan war reduce the pressures from the nuclear regulatory powers?

(b) Were there any successes in acquiring material and know-how for the program?

(c) Did Pakistan acquire nuclear weapons capability as a result of these efforts?

Getting answers to above questions and comparing the results with the state at the first snapshot will help determine the gains or losses in this important field.

Finally, Chapter VIII will summarize the conclusions of this research. Analysis of the gains and losses identified will then establish the impact of these on the capabilities of the PAF and how that is likely to influence their policies and actions at the national decision-making level.

CHAPTER IV

PAKISTANI ARMED FORCES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE AFGHANISTAN WAR

Pakistani Armed Forces (PAF) came into being when at the time of granting independence to their Indian colony, the British decided to create an independent Muslim state of Pakistan. They announced on July 1, 1947, that India and Pakistan would have operational control of their own armed forces. They set up a committee which divided the military assets between the two in the proportion of 64:36 in India's favor.¹ It was immediately obvious that Pakistan, alone, did not have the strategic depth or the resources to attend to two fronts of potential conflict in the North West (Afghanistan) and East (India). It set about correcting the imbalance with some zeal and its efforts met with a degree of success.

In the period since independence, Pakistan was involved in three wars with India over the Kashmir and other boundary issues. In addition, it undertook decade long support operations for the Afghanistan mujahideen against Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The PAF played a significant part in shaping the destiny of their country and constantly strived to find a niche for themselves in their own society, the region and the family of the Muslim nations. In order to ascertain the impact of the Afghanistan war (against Soviet intervention, 1979-89), it will be relevant first to trace the progress in the three selected areas of study to arrive at the state of the PAF at the beginning of the war.

Role In Domestic Political System

Right from its inception, Pakistan has seen political instability, even though most of the time, it has been administered with iron handed authority. The process started with the swearing in of M. A. Jinnah on August 14, 1947 as Pakistan's first Governor General. Jinnah had struggled relentlessly for creation of Pakistan as an independent nation. However, unlike in India, where Gandhi had stepped aside to leave the process of institution building and constitution making to Prime Minister Nehru and his lieutenants, Jinnah delegated little authority to his Prime Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan. He had to wait for 13 months, till Jinnah's death, before assuming political leadership. By then, dilution of the political and constitutional evolutionary process had already taken root.²

While he lived, Jinnah ensured that military's sphere of influence remained limited under a supreme civilian rule. After the departure of Liaqat Ali Khan from the scene, Pakistan's political pendulum swung widely in face of uncertain civilian rule between 1954 and 1958. It was then for the first time that the military under the army Commander-in-Chief, General Ayub Khan, struck.³ The army's first entry into national governance was greeted with a sense of relief by large segments of population who had got tired of the politician's machinations.⁴ There are two schools of thought about the reasons for the first military coup. The first suggests that the PAF was forced to intervene due to the political upheaval. The second theory suggests that even before the political vacuum, Ayub had conjured a grand plan as far back as 1953 for the coup in 1958, and had waited for five years only to consolidate his power base, the army.⁵

Ayub Khan dismissed the national assembly, dissolved all political parties, and set himself up as a dictator, with the title of

Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA). Twenty days later, he staged another coup--this time against Iskander Mirza, the President, who had originally invited him to depose the prime minister. October 27, 1958, was a historic day for Pakistan as it began the era of one-man rule.⁶ Ayub abrogated the first constitution of 1956, with its emphasis on Westminster model of government (effective power in the hands of prime minister, chosen by simple majority of the national legislature). He set about putting together the second constitution, which adopted in 1962, brought about a more centralized form of government. The powers of the legislature were severely curtailed and Ayub as the president had full control over the executive branch and a veto power over the legislature.⁷

Once in power, the military lost its reputation for integrity that the people had welcomed in the beginning. Important members were allowed to leave for more lucrative jobs in the industry or acquire huge tracts of land in prime cities. The PAF sank into the very mess it had promised to clean up. The loss of the military's appeal was demonstrated by Ayub's narrow win in the 1964 presidential elections.⁸ In order to regain lost ground and increase his popularity, Ayub launched "Operation Gibraltar" to grab Kashmir from India. This decision was stumbled into without any systematic decision making.⁹ The result was a stalemate. With the signing of the Tashkent agreement with India, the feeling in the country was that the military had surrendered the initiative to the adversary.

Foreign Minister, Z. A. Bhutto exploited Ayub's predicament by resigning from the government and campaigning against the military's alleged surrender at Tashkent. He weaned away the people disenchanted with the military regime with a promise of returning power to the masses. Bhutto assessed that the power could be wrested from the

military only by a mass movement of his followers. He concentrated on issues the military regime had failed to deliver, i.e., promise of an Islamic state and economic growth. Small group protests turned into a mass civil disobedience movement in West Pakistan and were soon followed by a similar movement in East Pakistan, led by Mujib-ur-Rehman. Ayub adopted a number of repressive measures, with little success. With another political stalemate, the military sensed a threat to its ability to influence national direction and intervened yet again.

On March 25, 1969, General Yahya Khan (who 22 years earlier had sat in an audience of young army officers, listening to Jinnah stress the military's subservient role in a civilian dominated system) deposed Ayub Khan and assumed the title of CMLA.¹⁰ The military set to bring down the political structure created by Ayub, who was beginning to place increased trust in selected politicians. The PAF believed that the required results in nation-building could only be achieved by the military working alone. A widespread purge of the politicians and the civil-bureaucracy was undertaken. The military associates of Yahya Khan assumed all power. So, a semi military state of sorts was created by Yahya Khan, which set yet another precedent for later military rulers like Zia-ul-Haq to follow.

Buoyed by success, Yahya introduced a contradiction in his approach to national governance which generated a new conflict between the military and the civil politicians. He appointed senior PAF officers to key political appointments and yet set up a process for return to parliamentary democracy.¹¹ Under the framework of a legal order of March 30, 1970, general elections were held on December 7, 1970. Mujib-ur-Rehman, the East Pakistan leader, won a majority in the national assembly and, hence, a chance to become the prime minister of combined Pakistan. This was unacceptable to the West Pakistani

politicians led by Bhutto, and the military hierarchy (dominated by West Pakistani generals). The military regime had faltered in diluting the political equation of East and West Pakistan by agreeing to one man-one vote, a clear advantage to the Eastern wing with its greater population.¹² Thus, this time round, it was the military regime and not the politicians, which had created political turmoil.

In desperation to control the situation in East Pakistan, Yahya Khan took some very harsh measures, codenamed "Operation Searchlight," against Mujib and his Awami party.¹³ This led to millions of refugees pouring from East Pakistan into neighboring India. The result was the 1971 Indo-Pak war, which proved catastrophic for Pakistan and led to dismemberment of its Eastern wing.¹⁴ The military regime stood totally discredited at this point and it was once again the charismatic Bhutto (himself partially responsible for the political stalemate leading to the conflict), who took advantage of Yahya's predicament. He made a transition to a civilian government (based on his party being the single largest group in the legislature as a result of the March 1970 elections). He vowed a "thousand years" war with India and chastised the military leadership for a tame surrender. With a show of defiant patriotism, he won the silent approval of his countrymen as well as the admiration of young army officers (who were disenchanted with their senior leaders). This middle-level leadership in the PAF deposed Yahya Khan and his senior colleagues, and helped Bhutto to be sworn in as the President and CMLA.¹⁵

Bhutto ushered in a new constitution on April 12, 1973, took over as the prime minister and set out to create a professional but subservient military establishment. He attempted to reduce the PAF's power and prestige without reducing fighting capabilities. The 1973 constitution provided harsh punishment for challenging civilian rule.¹⁶

In a demoralized and discredited state, the military accepted civilian supremacy but not the dominance of civil-service officers.

The military's disenchantment with Bhutto grew soon after it recovered from the state of shock and shame of 1971. The first problem came up when Bhutto decided to set up his private army, the Federal Security Force (FSF) in 1973. The FSF was to be given the best equipment and used in domestic disorders. He also caused some discomfiture by modifying the military's command structure to increase the civilian control in substance and style. For example, he abolished the title of commander-in-chief for head of each service and replaced it by chief of staff.¹⁷

In March 1977, Bhutto faced allegations of mass tampering with the general elections. He called in the FSF to suppress the general strike sponsored by the opposition parties. This led to over 300 deaths and imposition of martial law in major cities.¹⁸ The military did not want to be brought into a direct confrontation with the street demonstrators to bail out the discredited politicians. The generals took advantage of the popular mood, deposing and arresting Bhutto. General Zia-ul-Haq, Chief of the Army Staff, became the CMLA in an army operation called "Fairplay." He promised to hold elections in 90 days, sometime in October 1977.¹⁹

The events following Bhutto's arrest saw him address mass gatherings even in the prison compound and regain some of his popularity. The military, in an effort to stem this challenge, orchestrated a media campaign against Bhutto's alleged misdeeds while in power. A case was registered against Bhutto for masterminding the ambush of Ahmed Raza Kazuri, a one time political protégé turned opponent. In spurious court proceedings, which focused not only on the

criminal charge but also the way Bhutto had administered Pakistan, he was pronounced guilty on March 19, 1978, and ordered to be executed.

For one year, legal battles were fought by Bhutto's lawyers and international pressures mounted on Zia not to carry out the sentence. Always a thorn in the side as far as the military leadership was concerned, Bhutto was hanged on April 4, 1979.²⁰ This brought widespread criticism from most of the nations around the world. The human rights issue once again got back in focus and according to the US State Department officials, Pakistani military rulers were the worst violators.²¹

Fearful of resurgence of sympathy wave for the executed Bhutto and his Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Zia imposed additional restrictions on the scope of elections promised for November 1979. These included proposals for constitutional changes towards an Islamic political system and incorporating a permanent role for the military in the political system. In October 1979, faced with mounting domestic unrest, all political activity was banned, all political parties dissolved, and elections postponed indefinitely. Full scope censorship was imposed and powers of civilian adjudication procedures were curtailed in favor of the military courts.²² This further complicated matters for the military regime in finding international acceptance. The Carter Administration in the USA, with its emphasis on human rights, viewed this turn of events as boding ill for US-Pakistan relations.²³ The Muslim countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, were also dismayed at the manner in which Bhutto had been disposed of.

From a historical perspective, it would thus appear that the PAF constantly attempted to play a major part in national governance. They had little patience or faith in the civilian politicians. Generals Ayub and Yahya Khan tried to rule with a strong authority and allowed

concessions for political activity only when faced by strong civilian politicians like Bhutto or setbacks in the wars with India. Still, they succeeded in prolonging the military rule due to their personality and the fact that at the time, political parties were in their infancy.

In contrast, Zia was a little known figure in Pakistan. By the end of the seventies, PPP had established itself as a strong political entity. Bhutto's legacy was strong enough to haunt the military rulers. The level of popular opposition to Zia's harsh measures and the international reaction the military's intervention had drawn were indicators that this time round, the PAF's stay in active politics might be short-lived.

Efforts To Modernize Conventional Weapons Capability

The PAF have always sought sophisticated weaponry and the USA has been the number one supplier. In fact two months after independence, Jinnah dispatched a special emissary to Washington, requesting a \$2 billion loan which included over \$500 million for defense--a considerable sum at that time. Washington's response was lukewarm as it still considered South Asia Great Britain's defense responsibility.²⁴ From then until 1953, Pakistan set its course on a path of non-alignment, leaning more towards the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) and the Muslim world. However, it realized the sorry state of its armed forces when it came close to war with India in 1953.²⁵ The same year, US President Eisenhower wanted to reduce US involvement in other Korea type operations and build up indigenous fighting capabilities of the front line states (like Pakistan, as the Eastern bulwark against Soviet ambitions in South Asia). Pakistan seized the opportunity and signed a series of defense related agreements including the US-Pakistan Mutual Defense Agreement on May 19, 1954, South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) on September 8, 1954, and the Baghdad

Pact (renamed in 1959 as CENTO) in September 1955.²⁶ The theme of all these efforts was 'increased military assistance.' A beginning had been made with a \$175 million US commitment to equip five PAF divisions over a period of four years.²⁷ However, US resolve to assist militarily in case of a conflict with India remained suspect in Pakistan. Even the new security treaty signed by the first martial law regime of Ayub Khan did not help dispel these fears.

Dissatisfied with total reliance upon inadequate US military assistance, Ayub made a turnabout. After rejecting Soviet offers of arms for years, he proclaimed that " Pakistan would welcome military aid from any quarter as long as it did not affect its ideology and integrity."²⁸ He also signed a border agreement with the PRC in March 1963, in which he ceded a part of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK). He hoped that the PRC would side with Pakistan in the boundary dispute over Kashmir (the major cause of conflict with India). The PRC could also become another source of military assistance.

Pakistan's task of procuring sophisticated Western arms became more difficult during the Kennedy Administration which had a soft spot for India. Development of spy satellites in the USA rendered Peshawar, a forward base in Pakistan for the US U2 spy planes, redundant. The 1962 Sino-Indian war placed India higher on the priority for US military assistance. This was highlighted by the US decision to help raise fifteen air force squadrons and six additional army divisions in India as against only one F-104 jet fighter squadron for Pakistan.²⁹ Still, in the period between 1954 and 1965, the PAF received \$630 million in direct American assistance and over \$670 million in concessional sales and defense support assistance. With all this, the PAF was able to build a modern army of 300,000 to 400,000 troops and an air force of about 250 combat aircraft.³⁰

The 1965 and 1971 wars with India changed all that. The Johnson Administration in the USA ordered an arms embargo on both nations following the 1965 war. This was done in order to limit the duration of hostilities and punish Pakistan for infiltration across the armistice line into the Indian held part of Kashmir.³¹ This was devastating for the PAF because of its near total dependence on the USA for supplies in artillery, tanks, aircraft and logistical support systems. It did receive some arms shipments from the PRC.³² Later, some one time exceptions to the embargo were made for limited military sales, mainly in order to check the PAF from turning to the Soviet Union and the PRC for military hardware. For example, the Nixon Administration ordered the supply of 300 Armored Personal Carriers (APCs), at a cost of \$50 million. The initial deal had also included 50 F-5 fighter aircraft and 3 to 4 maritime patrol craft but this part fell through.³³

Pakistan's disenchantment with USA as the only source of arms reached a peak when, in 1969, it decided to close the Peshawar base for US use and promptly received an offer of \$30 million in Soviet military supplies.³⁴ The repression by the PAF in former East Pakistan forced the hands of Nixon Administration to clamp another arms embargo in April 1971. This lasted till April 1972, when some spare parts and non-lethal end items were allowed in. During this time, PRC's commitment to Pakistan remained mainly to moral support. Pakistan's Middle-East friends supplied limited oil, money, training ground for PAF soldiers but nothing more.

Meanwhile, India, the adversary, continued to receive generous support in arms sales from the Soviet Union. In addition, by incorporating key clauses in the Indo-USSR "Friendship Treaty" in August 1971, India was able to foreclose the possibility of any Soviet military help to the PAF during any conflict. After the humiliating experience

of the December 1971 war, most of the American equipment was worn out. Pakistan attempted to diversify its arms sources and by the mid-seventies, it was receiving military equipment from North Korea, PRC, Italy, West Germany, and even Soviet Union. In 1972, PAF's military purchases amounted to \$115 million and the government earmarked 20 percent of its export earnings for such deals.³⁵ However, Pakistan displayed a sense of urgency when Bhutto spoke of renewing the importance of CENTO and even offered the US a naval base at Gwadar on the Baluchistan coast. The USA was indifferent and suspected Bhutto of developing a full fledged naval facility at its expense (anticipated cost, \$2.5 billion) and then dumping US interests.³⁶

Bhutto tried to capitalize on the newly emerging significance of Pakistan in President Nixon's China policy. During his official visits to Washington in September 1973 and February 1975, he managed to get the embargo on arms sales lifted. However, Pakistan set itself firmly on the path of nuclear development by deciding to buy a nuclear reprocessing plant from France in 1976. This created new problems with the US congress. In order to induce Pakistan to drop the planned acquisition, the US offered the PAF 100 A-7 jet fighter aircraft.³⁷ The trade-off was not acceptable to Pakistan. Thus, the only military sale that went through even after lifting the arms embargo in 1975, was for some self propelled howitzers and two surplus non-operational destroyers.³⁸

On another front, there was more success. Bhutto convinced some Muslim countries to finance Pakistan's arms purchases. For example, Abu Dhabi sponsored the direct purchase of 32 Mirage-V aircraft for nearly \$650 million.³⁹ Bhutto also tried to forge closer military cooperation with Iran. Iranian AH-1J Huey Cobra helicopter pilots flew missions against Pakistani insurgents in the border province of Baluchistan. The

Shah of Iran gave \$850 million mostly in economic aid with little military aid. The PAF pilots flew Libyan aircraft in return for \$200 million in arms purchases.⁴⁰

Once in office, the Carter Administration denied Pakistan's request in June 1977 to purchase the A-7 fighters (that had been offered earlier in 1976), on the grounds that the advanced characteristics of the aircraft would set off an arms race in South Asia. The alternative offer constituted of the relatively obsolete A-4s or the limited range F-5s.⁴¹ The PAF was unimpressed in view of the recent Indian acquisition of Soviet MiG-23s and British deep penetration Jaguars.

The last contact with the USA prior to Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, came in November 1978, when Pakistan rejected a US proposal to sell 70 F-5s, HAWK surface to air missiles, armed helicopters and anti-tank weapons, at a total cost of \$500 million. This was done to resist US pressures that Pakistan should give up its nuclear program in exchange for conventional weapons. The curtain came down in April 1979 when all assistance to the PAF was terminated under the Symington-Glenn Amendment. This legislation forbade military and economic assistance to any country receiving nuclear enrichment equipment not subject to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.⁴²

Pakistan tried to overcome the continuous setbacks in arms acquisition by apportioning about 6 percent of annual GNP on military expenditure as against 3.5 percent by India, in the period between 1971 and 1978.⁴³ The PAF tried to overcome the mounting disparity between its own and Indian military capabilities in the area of weapons manufacture. It set up plants for light infantry weapons and ammunition at Wah. With Chinese assistance, it started the heavy rebuild factory at Taxilla for modernizing the Chinese supplied T-59 medium tanks and another rebuild/repair factory for upgrading the French Mirage-III and

Vs at Kamra.⁴⁴ However by 1980, due to non-availability of high quality steel, lack of adequate technological base and chronic shortage of foreign exchange, the PAF could not compete with India's drive for military self-sufficiency. Pakistan's attempts to diversify sources of arms supplies (after disappointing experiences with total reliability on the USA) produced their own complications due to requirement of varied spare parts and training bases.⁴⁵

In tracing out the history of the PAF till the Afghanistan war, two issues emerge clearly. First, the PAF constantly strived for modern weapons and defense technology. It tapped all possible sources-- Western, Eastern or non-aligned bloc of nations. However, the USA remained its primary source despite frequent embargoes resulting from policy differences. The second that the PAF was only marginally successful in acquiring state-of-the-art weapon systems. As a result, it fared poorly in the two wars with India in 1965 and 1971. At the start of the Afghanistan war, the PAF leadership clearly felt abandoned by the traditional Western sources. It felt frustrated at the widening lead enjoyed by Indian military. The prospects of any future breakthroughs and major arms transfers were bleak.

State Of Nuclear weapons Program

Pakistan started its nuclear energy program in 1956 and set up its atomic energy commission (PAEC).⁴⁶ The program was not oriented towards a weapon capability and the rationale seemed sound in view of Pakistan's chronic power shortage. From its inception, the program was more or less dependent on the USA. Decisions regarding the program were made at the highest level of the government. The martial law regime of Ayub Khan pushed the effort forward but had no intention of developing nuclear weapons.

In the words of one Pakistani scientific leader:

Had Pakistan planned for a nuclear weapon capability earlier on in the program, they could have pushed for acquisition of appropriate technology in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when not only technical help but also financing was readily available. For example, in 1958, the administration decided to go in for a much cheaper and easier to handle swimming pool type of research reactor against the recommendation of the chairman of PAEC, who wanted a more sophisticated C5 type reactor.⁴⁷

Outside the administration, not everyone shared this philosophy.

Z. A. Bhutto, the prime minister from 1972 and the real initiator of nuclear weapons program had even then linked Pakistan's sovereignty and leadership in the Islamic world to a nuclear weapon capability.⁴⁸

The major shift in Pakistan's nuclear policy came about after the loss of East Pakistan in the 1971 war. The sense of shock and feeling of insecurity, coupled with Bhutto's election as the prime minister, encouraged nuclear planners to seriously address the path of weapons capability. The Indian nuclear explosion in 1974 removed any remaining doubts and Bhutto gave the go ahead to M. A. Khan, then chairman of the PAEC, to develop a nuclear option for Pakistan's security.⁴⁹ Some evidence exists that actual plans for a nuclear weapon began even before the Indian explosion.⁵⁰ The senior leadership of the PAF did not initially like the nuclear weapon orientation. The feeling generated from the civilian domination of the program. A successful outcome was perceived as dilution of the military's direct role in the national security framework. However, this initial hesitation was later overcome by the opportunities that a nuclear weapons capability provided, including regaining some of the prestige lost in the 1971 war. Also, the PAF would have a substantial deterrent against an Indian capability and overcome to an extent undue reliance on foreign nations for supply of conventional weapons. Things looked bright at this point with the discovery of abundant quantities of Uranium in Pakistan.⁵¹

From the beginning, Pakistan was aware that its nuclear program was not to the liking of the USA, world leader in the nuclear non-proliferation arena. So, initially, Bhutto linked the scaling down of the nuclear program to transfer of sufficient quantities of conventional weapons by Washington. When he saw that the USA was ready to supply military equipment to India despite that country's nuclear explosion, he concluded that the sales of conventional weapons could not be a substitute for the nuclear policy.⁵²

On March 18, 1976, Pakistan signed an agreement with France for the purchase of a fuel reprocessing plant.⁵³ It was from this point on that Pakistan's nuclear program ran into troubled waters. An instant negative reaction came from the Canadians who were already feeling wronged by the reports that India had diverted plutonium produced at their Canadian supplied reactor for its explosion. Now it was being pointed out that many kilograms of weapon grade plutonium could be produced every year from the Canadian supplied heavy water reactor (KANUPP) in Pakistan. It was even suggested that in five years, there would be enough plutonium (500 kilograms) to make 100 bombs. So, the Canadians promptly suspended shipment of fuel supplies for the Pakistani reactor.⁵⁴

The most serious reaction came from the USA which took the deal as Pakistan's open declaration of a nuclear weapons program. Bhutto had probably read too much into lifting of the arms embargo by the Ford Administration. He had also counted on Saudi-Iranian influence in Washington to soften the blow. He tried to exploit the independent policies of France in order to pursue the nuclear program. However, an election year in the USA saw the challenger Jimmy Carter attack the Ford Administration for its half hearted measures in curbing nuclear

proliferation around the world. India's unchallenged explosion was cited as an example.

The USA adopted a two track policy. It put pressure on Pakistan to reconsider its policy and then started working on the French to cancel the deal unilaterally. In August 1976, Secretary of State Kissinger visited Pakistan to talk it out of the deal. He was not convinced by Pakistani arguments that the nuclear program resulted from a desire for self sufficiency in energy production. He put forth a number of countermeasures to dissuade Pakistan from going ahead with the program. He suggested building a joint regional nuclear reprocessing plant (presumably in Iran) for a stable source of nuclear fuel supply for the power plants. To convey Washington's understanding of Pakistan's security concerns and counter the hidden agenda behind the reprocessing deal, he offered 100 A-7 fighter aircraft.⁵⁵ The PAF leadership jumped at the prospects of an immediate gain rather than the uncertainties of a doubtful future capability. However, convinced of the long term strategic gains of a nuclear capability, Bhutto remained adamant and cited domestic pressures to justify keeping the program.

The US then pressed France to cancel the deal. In the beginning, in a spirit of nationalism, the Gaullist government of Prime Minister Jacques Chirac resisted all pressures. The deal was considered a bilateral matter between France and Pakistan. The French resented US pressures to cancel the deal. Part of the reason was economic as the French nuclear industry needed the technology export business to at least recover their research and development costs. However, once Chirac resigned in August 1976, President Giscard-de-Estaing took direct control of nuclear export matters. This was followed by a French-US détente on nuclear policy during Giscard's visit to the USA in October 1976. In December 1976, an order was issued by the French government to

"discontinue until further notice the export of reprocessing facilities."⁵⁶ Pakistan was still hopeful as the French announcement had spoken of future sales and was silent on the existing contracts. As time went by, Bhutto became more amenable to the A-7 offer but it was then too late.

With the coming of Carter Administration in the USA, the nuclear non-proliferation attitudes hardened even further and found sympathetic ears in the US Congress. Some of the members started working towards institutionalizing controls to impart permanency to non-proliferation goals and measures. France, by then, had fully come around to the US policy and made its intentions clear to Pakistan by offers of alternate technology (co-processing), by raising the costs, and delaying the supply of blueprints and critical components.

Bhutto's frustrations grew with the lifting of the US ban on shipment of enriched uranium to India (announced in June 1977). His anti-US stance hardened when rumors started circulating in Pakistan that the USA was conspiring to overthrow him because he happened to be pursuing a program oriented towards improving his nation's security. According to Foreign Minister Aziz Ahmed, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance had warned him directly that "Bhutto would not survive in power if he persisted in following the present course."⁵⁷ When Bhutto was overthrown by the military in July 1977, this theory gained credence in Pakistan, primarily because the PAF leadership which was the main beneficiary of his removal, was considered less motivated towards the program (for reasons mentioned earlier).

Once in power, there was a dramatic change in the attitude of the PAF. They could now take direct control of the direction of the nuclear weapons program. They were no longer constrained by civilian domination of this security related issue. Accordingly, they became

more intimately wedded to the concept of a nuclear umbrella for the security of Pakistan. General Zia reiterated Pakistan's determination to go ahead with the French deal, hoping that the French would reciprocate. However, on August 24, 1978, when French efforts to renegotiate the deal failed, a formal announcement was made to cancel the contract.⁵⁸ This was a major set back to Pakistan's nuclear program. It put Pakistani nuclear quest back by a number of years and brought the country to the forefront of international scrutiny.

The Carter Administration's policy of synchronizing congressional involvement in the non-proliferation goals also bore fruit with the enactment of the International Security Assistance Act of 1977. This amended the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 with the Symington-Glenn Amendment. It mainly dealt with issues of nuclear reprocessing transfers and nuclear detonations. In the latter field, it mandated cutting off all types of military assistance to a country which was not a nuclear armed state as defined in Article 1 of the treaty on nuclear non-proliferation, and which now detonated a nuclear device.⁵⁹

Pakistan had limited options at this stage. The plutonium option had exhausted itself by cancellation of the French deal and an inadequate availability of indigenous capability to construct a reprocessing plant. So, Pakistan turned towards a method involving physical rather than chemical enrichment of uranium. This method worked on separating weapon grade uranium from the abundant deposits of naturally available element in the country. This was an equally difficult process. The operation to construct this plant was undertaken covertly in several West European countries including UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and West Germany. The efforts became known when it was reported that an unidentified US company had sold multi phase high frequency inverters to Pakistan and a British subsidiary of another US

company (Emerson Electric) had been manufacturing inverters for a Pakistani special project.⁶⁰

The US administration reacted swiftly, urging all nations to cut off supplies for the enrichment plant and scrutinize all exports to Pakistan. In addition, the Symington-Glenn Amendment was invoked and all assistance to Pakistan suspended in April 1979. Pakistan acknowledged its research on uranium enrichment but continued to maintain that its nuclear program was peaceful in nature. Privately, its leadership felt frustrated with the US policy in South Asia, where India and Iran were to be the prominent actors.⁶¹

In August 1979, the military junta decided to separate the acquisition of nuclear weapon technology from the country's nuclear power development program. It was apparent that the military implications of the program had been decided. Also, there was an apprehension that India or Israel (at USA's backing) would take military action against the nuclear facilities at Kahuta and Nilore near the capital. Accordingly, the nuclear weapons program was placed under a special cell of the PAF Ordnance Department headed by a Major General and reporting directly to General Zia and not the Chairman PAEC.⁶² It was a desperate bid to stabilize a floundering nuclear weapons development program.

From the available facts, it appears that Pakistan did not seriously pursue the nuclear program in the initial years after independence. However, a humiliating defeat in the 1971 war, India's nuclear explosion in 1974, and disappointing experience with attempts to acquire modern conventional weapons brought home the urgency to develop a nuclear weapons program. Pakistan was totally dependent on the Western nations for nuclear technology. These nations at this point of time had begun to take the non-proliferation policies seriously. Thus,

Pakistan's repeated attempts to make headway in its nuclear orientation kept meeting a dead-end. At the start of the Afghanistan war, Pakistan was under severe international scrutiny of its nuclear program and stood isolated in the face of a US embargo on all aid.

Overall Analysis

By 1979, the prospects of the PAF gaining a dominating position in domestic politics and acquire a strong punch militarily did not look bright. The military, though in power, had little national and international credibility. Its days at the helm of affairs seemed numbered. The PAF's efforts to develop a continuous flow of sophisticated weapons had been unsuccessful. Pakistan's efforts to diversify the elements of its national power by establishing a nuclear weapons program had been stone-walled by global non-proliferation policies. All in all it was a frustrating time for the PAF.

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CHAPTER V

POLITICS AND NATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Start Of Military Rule

General Zia-ul-Haq, Chief of Army Staff in the Bhutto Administration, had deposed the prime minister in a coup in July 1977 and declared martial law. Since then, he had been ruling as the CMLA. However, in national and international circles, most analysts doubted whether Zia had the skills and stature for the job. Unlike his predecessors who had clearer visions about the future when they led the PAF into politics, Zia was unprepared to govern. For example, Ayub Khan had prepared a program for five years with great military detail before taking over. In contrast, Zia began hesitatingly and uncomfortably. His confusion of early days led to a joke that the initials of CMLA really stood for "cancel my last announcement." His rule seemed destined to be short lived.¹

By the time of his death in a fateful air crash, on August 17, 1988, Gen Zia had transformed himself into a key player on the Indian sub-continent. What caused this change in his stature? What made it possible for him to change from a man who did not seem to know his mind, to one who was at the center of one of the most historically important events of recent decades? The withdrawal under pressure of a Soviet occupation army. The prime reason was Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, coupled with Zia's decision to challenge a superpower known for its resolve.²

Internal Politics

On March 1, 1978, Zia issued a martial law regulation banning political activity, though not the parties themselves. His promise to hold free and fair elections in 1979 lured several Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) parties, including Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and Jamat-i-Islami, to permit their members to join the cabinet. Their aim was to secure a position of advantage as and when the elections were held. Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was excluded and suppressed. The elections to local bodies were held in September 1979 on a non party basis. However, a large number of PPP supporters, in the guise as Awami Dost (friends of the people) nominees, were elected. This created a fear in Zia's mind that if the national and provincial elections, scheduled for November 17 and 20, 1979, were held supporters of PPP might constitute a majority. This prompted Zia to cancel the elections. He justified his decision by declaring that the country was facing a deteriorating law and order situation. All through 1980, there was no significant impact of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on Pakistan's internal politics.³

Emergence of the Opposition

On February 6, 1981, the PPP and several smaller parties which had not been, or were no longer associated with PNA formed a group named Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD). The MRD was to work both to end martial law and hold free and fair elections. The elections were to be held in accordance with the constitution of 1973 which had been suspended by Zia on taking over the administration.⁴ The government's response to the crisis in Afghanistan became another matter of controversy. The military right from the beginning considered the Afghanistan issue a matter of national security. It controlled the

policy direction instead of diplomats. The domestic opponents of military rule tried to rally support against Zia's policy of actively involving Pakistan in the conflict. They cited anticipated frustration and fatigue of a long war in which Pakistan could be saddled with refugees unable or unwilling to return home. However, Zia's stifling of all political expression in the name of internal security largely precluded the war from becoming a widely debated issue in Pakistan's politics. Without the legal parties, in the absence of even quasi-parliamentary politics and with limited access to the media, the opposition had difficulty conveying their views.⁵

MRD's Challenge

On August 12, 1983, in a speech to Majlis-i-Shura (Federal Advisory Council), Zia unveiled a vague framework under which political power was to be transferred to civilian hands. Dissatisfied with the provisions, the MRD launched a civil disobedience campaign. Their main concern was the possible negative effects of the Afghanistan war on the socio-economic fabric, availability of goods and their prices, drug trafficking, and the crime rate and terrorism. Above all, the war could spill-over into Pakistani territory. There might also be armed clashes between Pakistanis and the Afghanistan refugees. The MRD complained that while it was prohibited from operating a free press in the cities and political process was suppressed, the Afghan elements in Pakistan were free to organize and publish their views and hold political meetings.⁶ The MRD's agitation was the most severe challenge to the martial law regime in its six years.

The Response

Zia bounced back by undertaking a series of much publicized dialogues with leaders of the moderate and right wing political parties

outside the MRD. These parleys were aimed at winning them over to the government's plan for resolving the political stalemate. He engineered splits between the PPP and non-PPP components of the MRD and survived the crisis.⁷ Zia also succeeded in manipulating the success of his Afghanistan policy as a referendum on his government. The national opinion surveys undertaken by the Islamabad-based Pakistan Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup Pakistan) between 1982 and 1986 indicated overwhelming popular backing for the government's support to the Afghanistan refugees. Zia termed it as an endorsement of martial law.⁸

Neutralization Of Opposition Parties

From the outset, there were other political elements in Pakistan prepared to appease the Soviets. Nusrat Bhutto, head of the PPP, advocated a direct deal with the Soviets to ensure Pakistan's sovereignty in exchange for recognition of the communist regime in Kabul. The MRD favored negotiations with the Kabul regime. More broadly, this was the opposition's way of opposing Zia's military government which was intent on pursuing the war. The anti-refugee stand of the leftist parties and intellectuals also resulted directly from their long standing antagonism to Pakistan's militant religious parties. As a result, these parties were subjected to internal strains, resulting in splits over the extent of support for the April 1978 revolution in Afghanistan, and then over which communist faction in Kabul deserved their support. The Afghanistan issue also complicated matters in attempts to forge an united front with other groups in opposition to Zia's regime.⁹

Build-up to the Elections

Pressure on Zia to hold elections mounted from the public at large, from the MRD, members of the Majlis-i-Shura and from outside,

especially the US congress which was unhappy with lack of a representative government in Pakistan.¹⁰ In 1984, Zia announced that the elections would be held in 1985 and this time the schedule was kept. Before the elections were held, Zia demanded a confirmation that even after the elections, he be allowed to continue holding the office of the president irrespective of the outcome. He achieved this through a referendum in November 1984, in which people were asked to approve Zia's conduct of the government and his path towards an Islamic state. The government announced that Zia had won an overwhelming vote of approval. Zia took the vote to mean that he had been "elected" to a five-year term as the president.¹¹

1985 Elections

Elections were conducted on a non-party basis and, with the opposition MRD boycotting, the outcome became a formality. On March 23, 1985, Zia hand-picked Muhammad Khan Junejo as the prime minister. Junejo promised an end to martial law by the end of 1985. Zia extracted a price before he agreed to this deadline. He issued the "Revival of the Constitution of 1973 Order," which firmly placed power in the hands of the president rather than the prime minister. The martial law ended as announced. Prime minister Junejo revived the political activity by activating the PML party.¹²

Politics of Friction

The elections produced a power struggle between Zia and his prime minister. Junejo challenged Zia on a number of issues including military promotions. The promotion system reflected strange dual hierarchy. Zia as chief of the army staff would submit recommendations for promotion to Junejo who was both the defense and the prime minister. Junejo would then refer the file back for approval to Zia the

president.¹³ This system often produced serious differences. Among other issues, Junejo stalled the constitutional amendment proposed by the supporters of Zia to make Shariah (religious code) the basis of Pakistan's law.

The Afghanistan issue, for the first time, became openly divisive within the government. In October 1987, Junejo ousted the Zia appointed foreign minister Shahabzada Yaqub Khan because he felt that Yaqub was giving too strong a direction to the Afghanistan policy. Disagreements focused on Junejo's efforts to build a consensus on ending the Afghanistan war and adopt a more liberal approach to the issue of Soviet withdrawal being negotiated in Geneva at the time. Yaqub, blessed by Zia, wanted to push for imposing tough conditions on the Soviet Union and not allow them to make a graceful exit from Afghanistan.

Junejo called for an all party conference on Afghanistan in March 1988 and signaled a more democratic direction to Pakistan's politics. Zia did little to hide his resentment of Junejo's attempts to build his own popular constituency at the expense of the PAF. On May 29, 1988, an explosion in Ojri camp near Islamabad destroyed tens of millions of dollars in CIA supplied weapons (for the use of Afghanistan mujahideen). Taking advantage of Junejo government's embarrassment over the loss, Zia dismissed the prime minister and dissolved the legislative bodies at national and provincial levels.¹⁴ Junejo's assertion of prime minister's role against Zia and the military had led to his downfall. By then, the PAF had come to play a prominent role in politics. Zia, as the president and chief of the army staff, was not willing to concede it to the civilian politicians.

1988 Elections

The three year political struggle between Zia and his prime minister had ensured two things. Firstly, sensing the popular mood, Zia had to observe the terms of the Geneva accord for Afghanistan (signed on April 15, 1988). Secondly, Zia could no longer curb the political aspirations of the people. Accordingly, he set November 17, 1988 as the date for national assembly elections. He made a last ditch effort to regain the lost ground by stipulating non-party elections. This was challenged in the courts. Before the ruling could come (in favor of party participation), Zia was killed in a plane crash in August 1988. On November 16, 1988, party based elections were held in Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto's PPP emerged as the single largest party. She was nominated as the prime minister by the acting president, Ghulam Ishaq Khan.¹⁵

Subjugation Of Important Institutions

In 1980, in an appeal of a case brought by Nusrat Bhutto against the proclamation of martial law, the supreme court ruled that the martial law regime was permitted to "perform such acts and promulgate legislative measures, which fell within the scope of the law of necessity, including the power to amend the constitution." To foreclose the possibility of any court arbitration on the "necessity and the scope of law," Zia promulgated the Provisional Constitutional Order of 1980. This order excluded all martial law actions from jurisdiction of the civil courts. When the Quetta (Baluchistan) High Court overruled the order, Zia came back with the Provisional Constitution Order of 1981. This contained a unique provision that the judges of the supreme and the high courts were required to take a new oath that would bind them to act faithfully in accordance with the newly promulgated order.

This resulted in complete subordination of the court system to the martial law regime.¹⁶

Zia's promulgation of the Revival of the Constitution Order of 1985 became the basis of the eighth amendment. This amendment tilted the balance of power in favor of the president. It also permitted President General Zia-ul-Haq to combine the office of chief of army staff and the president. This was contrary to the express provisions of all previous constitutions which stipulated that the president could not hold any other office of profit. The other key features of the amendment were the president's power to dissolve the national assembly, to nominate a prime minister and the discretion to appoint all chiefs of staff of the PAF. It also indemnified all previous actions of martial law regime. In effect, this amendment sought to set a precedent for future army chiefs to hold the most predominant office in Pakistan without being elected by the people. In addition, the Afghanistan crisis helped justify Zia's repeated delay in holding elections and gave him valuable time to consolidate his position.¹⁷

The period soon after August 1988 and through 1989, saw a period of intense judicial activity. The superior courts redeemed themselves by restoring the basic rights of the people, permitting party based elections, and asserting that they could review the sentences of the martial law authorities.¹⁸

The Islam Card

Right at the outset, Zia determined that an Islamic state, as defined by him and his advisors, was to be set up in Pakistan. That an Islamic state was favored by all the Muslim Pakistanis or even a substantial majority (despite creation of that country in 1947 on religious grounds), was questionable. However, it took brave persons to

oppose what was cleverly being presented as the law of God. Zia's announcement that the legal system would be based on Nizam-i-Mustafa (law of the Prophet) actually meant that any law passed by the parliament or the provincial assemblies would be required to conform to Shariah. The ruling in this matter would be given by Zia himself. In addition to the Islamization of the society, Zia sought to bring religion in politics as well. He created an appointive advisory body in February 1982. It was called Majlis-i-Shura and was modeled on the classic pattern of notables serving as advisors to the ruler of an Islamic state. Many observers attributed these actions to a clever scheme devised by Zia in which religion was pitted against the democratic form of politics. Zia apparently felt that the PAF were likely to gain in the resulting confusion. Another school of thought however, considered Zia a genuine believer, without any ulterior motives. It felt that Zia actually believed that political parties were divisive. This type of politics could not be permitted under the unified system of Islam in which all Muslims were presumed to be in agreement.¹⁹

The conflict in Afghanistan nicely reinforced Zia's efforts to institutionalize a nation governed by Islamic law. He used the religion as a major tool to legitimize military rule. The PAF's struggle against the communists in Afghanistan was depicted by Zia as a holy war to rid the Afghan (Muslim) brethren of their infidels. Adamant support for the mujahideen became "concrete evidence of the PAF's sincere commitment to Islam in both foreign and domestic policy." In contrast, Zia charged that the opposition political parties had no regard for the religion as they favored peace with infidels in Kabul.

The opposition to Zia instead charged that Zia was insincere. He was merely using the Afghanistan and the refugee cause for his

political survival rather than any genuine humanitarian or Islamic principles.²⁰ They termed Majlis-i-Shura an attempt to run the country's administration by subservient yes-men.

Zia preferred Hezb-i Islami headed by Gulbudin Hekmatyar, as the most favored of all the Afghanistan's religious parties based in Peshawar. Zia had a number of reasons for this bias. Gulbudin Hekmatyar, unlike some other Afghan resistance leaders, was opposed to the idea of independent ethnic and secular state of Pashtunistan, carved out of adjoining parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan. In Hezb-i-Islami, Zia saw a group that preferred an authoritarian and international brand of Islam. The relationship also brought him closer to the conservative Jamat-i-Islami (religious) party of Pakistan and helped him in his power struggle with the opposition parties. Zia, in particular counted on the Jamat party to legitimize his Islamization program and give cover to the collaboration between the PAF's intelligence agency (the ISI) and the most favored mujahideen group.²¹

Separatists Movements

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan cooled the separatist aspirations in both North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan. These two Western border provinces were most affected by the three million Afghanistan's refugees.²²

In NWFP, Pashtun nationalism became largely redundant as a result of the Afghanistan war. The Awami National Party (ANP) of Wali Khan, the veteran leader and for long champion of Pakistan's Pashtuns (Pathans) should logically have become the vehicle for mobilizing the Afghanistan's refugees in the frontier province. Most of the refugees were also fellow Pashtuns. Instead, the ANP ignored the cause of the displaced Afghans due to Wali Khan's close ties with Moscow. As a

result, the ANP earned the deep enmity of many former Afghan friends, who had been "brothers" in the Pashtunistan movement. The ANP had broken a basic precept of "Pashtunwali" or the tribal law, the obligation to extend protection to those cut off from traditional sources of security.²³

Baluch nationalism, if not dead, was handed a major setback. The Baluch leaders, who had hoped to obtain material support from Afghanistan to oppose the Islamabad government, were disappointed and discredited. The Soviets, in their desire to limit their involvement in Afghanistan, largely refrained from instigating the Baluchi rebels, including those waiting inside Afghanistan. It also became difficult for Baluchi separatists to rally nationalist feelings in a Pakistan province that had become host to hundreds of thousands of Afghanistan's refugees of different stock. A revival of secessionist activities against Zia's regime would have called for a close alignment with a Kabul regime at war with fellow Muslims.²⁴

The foreign military assistance that Zia's government attracted as a result of the war favored the Punjabis among the ethnic groups because they had for long dominated the military establishment. By this reasoning, any strengthening of the federal government also enhanced power of the Punjabi majority. The major opposition party, PPP had its support base in Sind province. So, the resources provided as a result of the war probably improved the position of Zia's government in its ability to deal with the centrifugal forces besetting Pakistan.²⁵

International Stature

Zia gained tremendous international stature as a courageous and principled leader by standing up to the Soviet might. Despite criticism in the US of the PAF's human rights record in early eighties, the US

administration was relieved when the MRD-led anti-military-regime agitation in 1983 petered out, following Zia's machinations and crackdowns. Washington's main concern was that any unresolved internal crisis would threaten Pakistan's steadfastness as a front-line state in the US South West Asian strategy. A major aim of the US security assistance program was to help Pakistan resist the Soviet pressure to accommodate the communists in Afghanistan. This goal would have been jeopardized if the PAF had been forced by the domestic opposition to opt out of its involvement in the Afghanistan war. The most sensational critique of the military regime's Washington linkage was offered by Benazir Bhutto, then the titular co-leader of the PPP. In 1983, in a book titled "Pakistan: The Gathering Storm," she bluntly accused Pakistan's generals of being agents of the Pentagon and the State Department. She exonerated the Soviets of any aggressive designs on Pakistan.²⁶

The Carter Administration had suspended economic assistance to Pakistan in April 1979. In 1981, the Reagan government decided to help Pakistan confront the Soviets. It worked out an assistance package of \$3.2 billion over a period of six years. The amount was to be equally divided between the military and economic assistance. Once the initial six year period was over, a new program was announced in March 1986. This was a larger package, \$4.02 billion, with the economic aid increasing to 57 percent, \$2.28 billion.²⁷

The economic assistance packages became a major reason for the impressive performance of Pakistan's economy under Zia. The GNP doubled in real terms between 1978 and 1988. This helped Zia neutralize his critics and become popular with the common people who had been hit by the economic stagnation of the seventies. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan immediately made Pakistan a less attractive

candidate for the US aid. A number of important congressmen lost no time in demanding a diversion of US aid to Eastern Europe.²⁸

The war in Afghanistan helped improve Pakistan's image worldwide. In November 1986, for the seventh year in a row, the UN general assembly approved by an overwhelming vote a resolution endorsing Pakistan's demand for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign (Soviet) troops from Afghanistan. The war helped give publicity to Pakistan's humanitarian role in accommodating three million refugees and accorded Zia's regime an added prestige.²⁹

The Saudi Arabian rulers were major players throughout the war with the communists. The Riyadh government helped to fund a large part of Pakistan's military buildup during the period. Zia used the "Islam" and "anti-communist" card to his advantage in the Organization of Islamic Unity (OIC). He cemented these bonds by stationing PAF elements in some Middle East countries. In 1983, about thirty thousand PAF soldiers were on duty abroad.³⁰

Zia effectively used the Afghanistan conflict to isolate the opposition parties from any significant international attention. The PPP charged that Zia had seized upon the war as a means of getting the West to help prop up his unpopular regime. It felt that unless the US reduced its aid to Pakistan, most of all its military support, Zia would be able to resist ending martial law and conducting elections. The PPP felt confident of winning the elections. Opponents of the regime were convinced that Zia's major concern was rebuilding of the PAF. The government wanted to keep the war going, even passing up chances of a settlement, mainly out of fear of losing international attention and aid.³¹

The Emerging Picture

Zia, long a steadfast and valued spokesman for the Afghanistan mujahideen, died in a plane crash in August 1988. Also killed were Lt Gen Mian Mohamad Afzal, head of the military intelligence cross-border operations, and Gen Akhtar Abdul Rehman, head of the ISI and an ardent supporter of continued military pressure on the Kabul government.³² This resulted in a vacuum in the PAF leadership for sometime. In that period, national elections were held in October 1988. The PPP emerged the single largest party.

The new democratically elected government, led by Benazir Bhutto, was installed two months prior to Soviet pullout from Afghanistan in February 1989. She was widely expected to put her own stamp on the Afghanistan policy, moving towards an early political settlement. She was also expected to clip the wings of the PAF. The military and the civilian hierarchies would then be brought into a near uniformity of views on the Afghanistan issue. As a prime minister, Bhutto at the urging of USA, was expected to crack down on drug involvement of the military in border areas. In addition to doing these, Bhutto sought to control the illegal sale of arms. When the military planners suffered embarrassment due to reverses in the Jalalabad attack in Afghanistan in spring 1989, Bhutto took the opportunity to dismiss the ISI head, Lt Gen Hamid Gul who had been a close confidant of the late Zia.³³

The PAF leaders strongly resisted any dilution of the ISI's powers. Rather than exert her will over the military, the prime minister found it necessary to conciliate the generals in order to gain their neutrality in her battles with the aggressive opposition party of Nawaz Sharif. The military, with President Gulam Ishaq Khan as its new spokesman, exacted a price for its neutrality. Bhutto's choice as the

ISI chief, Gen Shamsur Rahman Kallu never amounted to much more than a figurehead. In effect, control of the ISI and the Afghanistan policy was assumed directly by the army chief, Gen Aslam Beg.³⁴

The power struggle between the president and the prime minister became, in essence, a question of the role of the PAF in the state. Bhutto had another early encounter with the PAF leadership when she announced the retirement of Admiral Sirohey, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. Before the notification could be issued, the president released a press statement that the admiral would continue in office. Following a war of words, the prime minister had to retreat and carry on a frustrating effort to gain control over the PAF.³⁵

The Final Analysis

If asked what was the single most important political consequence of the Afghanistan war for Pakistan, few Pakistanis would fail to mention the perpetuation of General Zia's military rule.³⁶ As both the president and chief of army staff of the country, Zia made certain that those responsible for carrying out his Afghanistan policy, shared his views of the conflict as a holy war. It was to be supported at whatever cost to Pakistan. Not only did the ISI share Zia's policy preference, the intelligence service was an integral part of his political control. The service ran surveillance on domestic political opponents and undermined them by giving support to politicians deemed more friendly.³⁷

The Afghanistan conflict that seemed to strengthen one military regime for nearly a decade actually weakened confidence in the survivability of the democratic government that followed. The civilian government attempted to dilute the PAF's role in formulating the future Afghanistan policy and tried to distance Pakistan from too active a role

in that country. This brought it into a direct clash with the PAF leadership, and threatened its survivability. Such a trend might become a catalyst in destabilizing the future civilian governments of Pakistan as and when they tried to assert their supremacy in formulating Pakistan's security policies.

A significant contribution of Zia's Afghanistan crusade might have been the definition of a role for the military in Pakistan's politics. Two facts emerged. First, that all future governments must not overlook the PAF's power and influence in Pakistan. Second, that the PAF may no longer stage coups and govern without the explicit support of a major cross-section of Pakistan's political elite. This was echoed by General Mirza Aslam Beg who succeeded Zia as chief of army staff. Beg declared that although he and his military colleagues did not have any political ambitions, it was legitimate for the PAF to keep a watchful eye on the politicians.³⁸

All in all, the Afghanistan war diverted the attention of domestic and international opponents of General Zia's military regime. The conflict provided Zia a chance to move away from the spotlight. The legitimacy of the military regime ceased to be the main issue of focus. Instead, the in-country debate shifted to nature and extent of Pakistan's involvement in the Afghanistan war, and the Western countries became pre-occupied with the Soviet threat in Asia.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER VI
ACQUISITION OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

Initial Events

The PAF had received no US security assistance after April 1979. Following Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on December 25, 1979, the US framework for assistance changed overnight. President Carter stated to a joint session of the Congress on January 23, 1980, that "any attack by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of USA. And such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."¹ As far as Pakistan was concerned, the exigencies of the situation demanded its backing away from the earlier hard-line postures against the USA. The first plan unveiled in the US as the initial response comprised two annual doses of aid, each consisting of \$100 million in economic aid plus an equal amount in military hardware, to be provided to Pakistan over a two year period. The initial list of arms included the Red-eye man-portable infrared guided missiles, the improved Hawk anti-aircraft missiles and the TOW anti-tank missiles.²

Pakistan gave a cool reception to the US overtures. General Zia-ul-Haq characterized the aid offer of \$400 million, of which only \$200 million was for military aid, as "peanuts".³ The US response was one of shocked incomprehension. From the PAF's point of view, years of difficulty over arms sales and a deep sense of betrayal at the imposition of repeated arms embargoes caused them to question the US reliability in security matters. To get Pakistan out of a relationship

that had all along been based on the presidential personalities in the USA, Zia wanted to formalize continuity by a treaty ratified by congressional commitment. This led to an initial impasse, following which Zia was reported to have conveyed a veiled threat that "in absence of active participation by the US, Pakistan may have to adapt itself to a new reality. After all, if you lived in the sea, you had to learn to swim with the whales."⁴ Angered by Pakistan's reaction, Carter did not revise the package and it was left to his successor to make a more dramatic shift in US policies.

Major Policy Shifts

The USA had been historically the principal arms supplier for the PAF despite periodic arms embargoes. As far as arms transfer policies of the USA and other nations like the PRC were concerned, the entire period of the Afghanistan conflict can be divided into two distinct phases. The first phase lasted till about 1986, culminating with peak US involvement and PRC support still in its nascent stage. The second phase after 1986 saw a US retraction, with the PRC stepping in to fill the void.

Pre-1986 policy developments

President Reagan had demolished the incumbent Carter in the presidential elections of 1980 by attacking the latter's foreign policy, especially towards Soviet expansionism, as weak and appeasing. The new administration emphasized Pakistan's magnified strategic importance to the West and advocated giving precedence to containing the Soviet threat over other policy goals, such as non-proliferation. Congress accepted the administration's reasoning and in 1981, consented to a temporary six-year waiver of the anti-proliferation Section 669 (Symington

Amendment) of the Foreign Assistance Act.⁵ This opened the flood-gates of military hardware to the PAF.

The upswing in the USA's favorable disposition continued throughout Reagan's first term in office. For fiscal year 1984, the administration requested congressional approval of a security assistance program amounting to \$5.8 billion for twenty two of the forty littoral states of the Indian Ocean. The proposal for Pakistan, consisting of \$300 million in Foreign Military Sales (FMS), \$225 million in Economic Support Fund (ESF), and \$800,000 in International Military Education and Training (IMET) support, came to \$525.8 million, or about nine percent of the total. It placed Pakistan fourth in the world after Israel, Egypt, and Turkey among the ninety one recipients of US security assistance.⁶ A significant policy modification to this positive phase came about in 1985, when in allowing the sale of Harpoon anti-ship tactical cruise missiles to the Pakistani navy, the administration sought to shift the grounds for the assistance. The notification of the sale to the Congress pointed out that in addition to checking the threat of Soviet expansionism, the PAF were playing an even greater role as a stabilizing force in the Indian Ocean region. They were strategically important in the defense of sea lines of communication (SLOC) in the Arabian Sea and approaches to the Gulf.⁷

Following their disappointment with the 1980 Carter package, Pakistan had counted on its old friend, the PRC, for increased military aid. However, while the Chinese assured Pakistan that Sino-Pakistani relations occurred outside the Sino-American framework, they advised to cooperate with the US (largely for their own interests as they had been seeking US assistance for their own modernization programs).⁸

Right from the beginning of the Afghanistan conflict, Zia had looked towards the Islamic nations for support. The first meeting of 35

Muslim nations took place on January 27, 1980, and urged all Muslim states to support the Islamic countries neighboring Afghanistan.⁹ Afghanistan might have been the clinching argument for an enhanced three-way US-Pakistan-Saudi Arabia military cooperation. In February 1980, Zia encouraged the USA to forge improved Saudi-Pakistani military nexus, leading the Saudis to agree to an exchange of arms for Pakistani security assistance to them.¹⁰

On its part, the PAF also sought to develop active ties with the defense services of other Islamic countries, especially in the Middle East. This fitted well in the new Islamization drive of Zia. There were other motives too. Mary Ann Weaver, writing in the "Christian Science Monitor" of October 3, 1983, stated that "Pakistan had as many as 30,000 military persons stationed in 24 foreign countries, of that total, 20,000 were said to have been in Saudi Arabia." Weaver reported that in exchange for the well-trained, well-disciplined PAF troops (who were uninterested in internal Saudi politics), the Saudi government was footing the bill for half of PAF's new F-16 aircraft and other military hardware.¹¹

Post-1986 Policy Developments

Even before the first six-year Reagan package was to expire in 1987, efforts began to work out another six-year military and economic aid proposal. However, in the emerging US aid program for Pakistan, some new issues (not auguring well for the PAF) emerged. The first was the priority to be accorded to the assistance program for Pakistan in light of the requirement to move towards a balanced budget in the USA. The US Administration had to walk a tightrope between the high priority foreign assistance programs and overriding domestic budgetary interests.

The second issue grew out of the desire expressed by the Soviet Union to pull out of Afghanistan. Though it was only in February 1988

that the Soviets publicly announced their decision to pull out troops by the middle of February 1989, the decision to do so was taken at a politburo meeting on November 13, 1986, chaired by Mikhail Gorbachev.¹² A number of members of the US Administration favored easing the pressure on the Soviets to encourage a graceful exit. They felt that any additional militarization of the region would only escalate tension, and set the clock back.

The third aspect was the beginning of protests in Congress over Pakistan's continued march on the nuclear road. This was against the Reagan Administration's original contention that building up conventional weapons capability of the PAF would make nuclear weapons redundant from Pakistan's perspective. So, even as the officially announced strategic analysis of the region put Pakistan high on the priority of US interests, some Pakistani analysts had started to see ominous signs of a cracking relationship.¹³

On February 16, 1987, in Islamabad, the outgoing US Ambassador, Deane Hilton conveyed a blunt public warning to the Zia government that Pakistan's clandestine nuclear program could result in the cut-off of American economic and military aid.¹⁴ Pakistan was still the essential vehicle for covert military aid to Afghanistan's resistance. On the other side, there were indications of a potential breakthrough in the Geneva negotiations on ending the Afghanistan war. This set off speculation that the US might no longer feel constrained to turn a blind eye to some of Pakistan's activities. Conversely, for the sake of continuity in the South West Asian policy, key members of the administration contended that unless the US was willing to sacrifice Afghanistan's resistance movement, it could not make continued arms aid to the PAF conditional on Pakistan's abandonment of its nuclear program.

The Symington Amendment needed to be waived again if the arms aid was to flow through Pakistan to the resistance.

Congress was, at that time, willing to go along with the administration's reasoning, albeit reluctantly. In April 1987, both the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved a shortened , two year waiver of the Symington Amendment.¹⁵ Consequently, in May 1987, PAF's request to lease American airborne early warning (AEW) radar aircraft to defend against border attacks by airplanes based in Afghanistan met with considerable sympathy in congressional hearings. But, eventually, the waiver time ran out before any decision could be arrived at.¹⁶

When the second Reagan package was announced, Pakistan was told that the program would continue even if the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan. Nonetheless, in December 1988, the US first decided to withhold new equipment meant for the resistance in anticipation of war's early end. The CIA was also anxious to collect back the more sophisticated weapons supplied earlier. Next, in early 1990, the Republican leader in the Senate, Robert Dole suggested that Pakistan would have its aid reduced in order to fund other demands on the foreign assistance budget.¹⁷

In the latter half of the eighties, US commitment somewhat retracted. Finally, differences on Pakistan's nuclear program led to the US imposing another arms embargo in 1990. During this period, the role of the PRC and the Islamic countries in augmentation of the PAF increased manifold. The PAF gained significant technological and material assistance from the PRC for its ambitious defense production projects, including the nuclear, missile, and mechanization programs. Close cooperation with the PRC in support to Afghanistan's resistance movement during the first half of the eighties brought about a greater

understanding and mutual confidence in areas of shared interests. It also led to close relations between the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) and the PAF in the second half of the decade. However, there were no significant arms transfers as such. This was primarily because in terms of military ready-to-use hardware, the PAF was still pursuing the more sophisticated and potent Western technology.

Arms Transfers

Pre-1986 Acquisitions

To begin with, the Carter Administration, despite the failure to arrive at a mutually acceptable package for future aid, expedited the delivery of \$100 million worth of arms. This included 230 armored personnel carriers (APCs), air-combat and anti-tank missiles, 105 millimeter (mm) artillery pieces, communication equipment and spare parts. These arms had previously been bought for cash and were not barred by the US embargo on direct military aid on easy terms credit sales.¹⁸

Once the new Reagan policy was in place and after long discussions and bargaining, Pakistan formally accepted the US package on September 15, 1981. This followed the Finance Minister Agha Shahi's visit to Washington in April 1981, Under-Secretary of State James Buckley's visit to Pakistan in June and September, and finally, the visit of a PAF delegation to the US in July the same year. The six-year package of \$3.2 billion was to be equally divided in economic and military aid. The arms and equipment for the PAF included TOW missile equipped Cobra helicopters, 24 missile launchers, 2000 anti-tank guided missiles, 200 tanks including M-60s, M-113 APCs, auto radar and night vision equipment.

The most significant of the acquisitions were to be 100 F-16 highly sophisticated, long range, counter-air mission fighter aircraft.

Of these, four squadrons (about 60 aircraft) were to be covered by the package deal and the PAF would buy the remaining 40 for about \$1.1 billion in cash. The US agreed to deliver seven F-16s before October 1982. In anticipation of the aid package being accepted by Pakistan, the US administration, on April 30, 1981, asked Congress to approve \$100 million in security related economic aid to Pakistan for fiscal year 1982.¹⁹

Taking advantage of a favorable international disposition towards Pakistan around 1981-82, the Pakistani navy set about finalizing deals with France and the UK to acquire modern vessels. Major new items included AM-38 Exocet missiles for the six naval-airforce Sea-King helicopters and three Atlantic maritime patrol aircraft, and two Augusta class submarines (with an option for two more from France). In addition, twelve of the airforce's 50 Mirage-III aircraft were to be equipped with AM-39 Exocet anti-ship missiles for maritime strike duties. Contracts were signed for Harpoon anti-ship missiles in air, sea and sub-surface launch versions. The navy also received four Hoku-class Chinese fast attack craft (FAC), an ex-US navy reconditioned Gearing class destroyer and modern missile frigate in the form of two T-21 vessels. The T-21 frigates were equipped with vertically launched Sea-Wolf anti-missiles and PHALANX close-in-weapon-system (CIWS) in addition to the Harpoon/Exocets. In 1982, the UK transferred an ex-Royal Navy county-class destroyer which was equipped with Sea-Cat SAMs.²⁰

The PRC sold the PAF submarines, patrol boats, modern tanks, MiG-19 aircraft, and TU-2 and TU-16 bombers. The Chinese military instructors provided training to the PAF in dealing with internal instability in Pakistan and intrusions by Soviet aircraft.

Post-1986 Acquisitions

The first six-year \$3.2 billion US aid package of 1981 came to an end on September 30, 1987. On March 24, 1986, the US and the Pakistani governments announced an agreement on a \$4.02 billion aid package. It consisted of \$2.28 billion in economic aid and \$1.74 billion in military sales credit for the ensuing six years.²¹ The first military package had enabled the PAF to improve self-defense capability. This package had laid emphasis on acquiring basic naval technology, air-defense equipment and modest number of aircraft. This was done with a view to secure hardware that offered maximum cost-benefit advantage in military terms and fulfilled a generally defensive-deterrent orientation to the PAF.

The second US arms aid package, for the years 1987-92, proposed to extend the process of modernization another step forward. The PAF's long term quest for an airborne early warning and command and control (AEW C&C) system also looked like being met through this package. The PAF's main motivation for an AEW C&C system was to close the force disparity with the Indian airforce. In fact, sometime between 1984 and 85, the US DOD conducted a demonstration of two E-2C Hawkeye aircraft over Pakistani territory at US expense. Plans pertaining to the acquisition of the system were also discussed during the Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger's visit to Islamabad in October 1986. The PAF was angling for the superior E-3A Sentry system and even proposed accepting temporary lease of the aircraft in case its sale was not acceptable to the US.²² The deal never materialized because of a snag in implementation of the second package deal. Congress had approved the package on a continuing condition that the proposals for arms sales to Pakistan be approved by it on an annual basis. The pre-requisite for

approval was a presidential certificate that Pakistan was not in possession of a nuclear device. President Bush, after taking over from Reagan, found it difficult to certify Pakistan's nuclear innocence. So, the aid package was prematurely killed in its fourth year in 1990.

Summary

The arms transfer deliveries to the PAF against Pakistan's total trade in two distinct periods, first from 1971 to start of the Afghanistan crisis, and second during General Zia's martial law rule until the Soviet pullout in 1989 are shown in Appendix A. It is evident that during the seventies, the annual arms imports figures stayed very much below \$200 million mark. However, in the following decade, there were quantum leaps periodically, resulting in peak figure of \$600 million by the time of Soviet withdrawal. In terms of arms imports as a ratio of total imports, the percentage figures initially touched the double digit mark immediately after the 1971 debacle but declined in the subsequent years. The mid-eighties saw an appreciable upward trend again and the ratio hovered around 8 to 10 percent mark. Considering the fact that total imports themselves had increased by five to eight times in this period, even a small appreciation in the percentage ratio brought about a substantial increase in the receipt of arms. Also, during this period, the PRC extended expertise in the development of the "Hatf-I" and "Hatf-II" tactical missiles. In 1989, there were talks for finalizing transfer of the Chinese long range Silkworm type missiles to the PAF.²³

Arms Conduit And Diversion

Just days after Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Carter signed a presidential finding on covert action to supply lethal weapons to the Afghanistan mujahideen through the Pakistani authorities. This

action was to harass the Soviet occupation forces in Afghanistan. The first arms, mainly .303 Enfield rifles, had arrived in Pakistan on January 10, 1980, fourteen days after the invasion.²⁴ In Pakistan, General Zia chose the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) as the sole agency to deal with covert arms supply to the mujahideen. Initially, the ISI-distributed arms were not the heavy weapons sought by the mujahideen. The ISI also sought to control both the quantity and the quality of the weapons. This was done to avoid antagonizing the Soviets openly (thereby inviting counter-strikes on major arms storage sites in Pakistan). Another goal was to limit the flow of Afghanistan's refugees due to escalation of the fighting.²⁵

Over time, the weapons supplied through Pakistan increased in number and sophistication. In May 1984, the Afghanistan government alleged that President Reagan had confirmed Washington's intention to increase the flow of weapons to the counter-revolutionaries and impart a qualitatively new aspect to the aggression.²⁶ The US had, at that time, proposed to allot \$500 million in arms aid to Afghanistan's rebel groups who operated from Pakistani territory. Another \$200 million was to come from the Arabs, mainly Saudi Arabia.²⁷ By the late eighties, however, the US alone was providing as much as \$600 million in support. Throughout the decade, more than \$2.5 billion was set aside by the US for purchase and supply of arms to Afghanistan's resistance groups.

The CIA purchased arms from China and Egypt, and distributed them through the ISI. The level of Saudi funds increased to an estimated \$400 to 500 million by the end of the decade.²⁸ As the arms supplies became massive, large depots were located in Pakistan. The largest camp was at Ojri on the outskirts of Rawalpindi. Zia had insisted that once the arms reached Pakistan, they would come under ISI's sole control. The PAF's National Logistic Cell handled the

shipment of arms to the Afghanistan border. The arms were transferred by a fleet of trucks to small distribution centers around Peshawar. The mujahideen took direct control of the weapons from there.²⁹

Diversion Of Arms By The PAF

During 1983, approximately 10,000 tons of arms and ammunition were received and the figure rose to 65,000 tons in 1987. In 1984, 60,000 rifles, 8,000 light machine guns and over 1000 million rounds of ammunition were received from Turkey. In mid-1984, fifty Swiss-designed 20 mm Oerlikon heavy anti-aircraft guns, hardly suited for the rugged terrain in Afghanistan, were received and did not go beyond the border bases in Pakistan.³⁰ In 1985, the ISI received 10,000 RPGs (rocket propelled grenades) along with 200,000 rockets. The type of weapons ranged from small arms to anti-tank and anti-aircraft rocket launchers and guns. Initially, the great bulk had come from China, Egypt, and some from Israel (weapons captured during Israel's invasion of Lebanon). This was done to maintain the facade that the West was not giving any material assistance. In 1986, the US decided to allot annually 250 grip-stocks (launchers) of Stinger anti-aircraft weapon systems, together with 1000 missiles. Flushed by initial success of the covert program, this was the first significant non-Eastern origin weapon system brought into play.³¹

The entire system of arms-supply worked in a complex manner. In advance of the US annual budget allocations, CIA would give the ISI a suggested list of arms to be supplied to the mujahideen. The ISI would then draw up the final requirement. In the USA, there was a considerable uproar over the PAF exploiting the procedure for its own purpose. The headlines in the Washington Post of May 8, 1987 said:

Afghan Rebel Aid Enriches Generals - The CIA has spent \$3 billion on arms for the Afghan rebels, half of it put up by the US taxpayers. Yet, not a single American decides who gets the weapons.³²

The US government tolerated the regular siphoning-off of aid passed across the border from Pakistan. The resistance leaders were believed to have sold off hundreds of millions of dollars worth of weapons from the CIA arsenals in the arms bazaars of Peshawar. The US also looked the other way when it received reports that elements of the PAF were involved in this. Almost as a matter of policy, the PAF laid claim to a large share of the weapons flow. Zia's armed forces saw it their right to appropriate weapons from the CIA shipments. CIA probably condoned the theft as a sort of commission or as a way of doing business with the government in Pakistan. It was believed that at least 20 to 30 percent of the total arms received were siphoned off the pipeline.³³

In early April 1988, the entire arms and ammunition stock (approximately 10,000 tons) held by the ISI at Ojri Camp, went up in a big explosion. The Soviets were the prime suspects in a sabotage theory. However, from the point of view of the PAF, even CIA was high on the suspect list. CIA might have wanted to deprive the mujahideen of crucial weapons in their drive to win the war. This would have ensured an uninterrupted Soviet withdrawal (as was to be agreed upon in the Geneva settlement). The theory gained further credence when the CIA made no efforts to replenish the stock till the Soviets were actually gone from Afghanistan. It was a dramatic shift in the US-Pakistan relationship.³⁴

Fully aware of the pilferage and siphoning of arms, CIA was worried about their proliferation after the Soviets withdrew. The agency asked the Congress for an unspecified additional amount to beef up the already apportioned \$15 million to buy back its own Stingers. Beginning with the offer of \$6,665, CIA operatives were later offering \$100,000 per Stinger. However, no more than a handful came back. The

Indian government, worried at the prospects of their employment by the PAF in a future conflict, protested to the US administration.³⁵

Defense Production And Expenditure

The imposition of US embargoes from time to time in the PAF's history had led to establishment of defense industries in Pakistan. However, lack of technology, infrastructure and foreign exchange had prohibited any significant growth in this field. The heightened security concerns following the Afghanistan crisis led Zia's military regime to accelerate the defense production on a war footing. The defense production division drew up an ambitious plan to provide resources and set production goals for its different agencies. As a result, Pakistan's 33 ordnance factories (including factories for weapons, small arms ammunition, artillery ammunition, heavy artillery and rockets, bombs and grenades) even ended up exporting annually between \$30 and 40 million worth of military goods to countries in West Asia, North Africa and South East Asia.³⁶

The defense industries achieved considerable diversification manufacturing arms and ammunition of both Western and Eastern origin. For example, by 1985, G3A3 rifles and MG3 machine guns of German origin, mortars and their ammunition (mostly French), rockets and launchers of Soviet design, tank ammunition and recoilless rifles with their ammunition (British and American), and medium and heavy caliber artillery ammunition of Chinese and Western origin were under production. The heavy rebuild factory at Margala undertook overhaul and rebuild of T-59 tanks with Chinese assistance. The Pakistan Aeronautical Complex at Kamra, also with Chinese help, rebuilt F-6 and Mirage aircraft. The first batch of these light planes rolled out on December 15, 1983.³⁷ A number of large-scale projects in ship-building, repair and dry-docking were undertaken at the Karachi Shipyard.

After Zia assumed power, defense expenditure more than doubled by 1983-84 and this trend continued. In the 11 year period between 1977 and 87, PAF's annual outlay increased by 415 percent (in current dollars) as against 282 percent of neighboring India.³⁸ Appendix B shows military expenditure in relation to overall GNP between the period 1972 and 1990. It is apparent that defense spending increased consistently during the eighties and rose from \$861 million in 1977 to a peak of \$2829 million in 1990 (an increase of more than three fold in current terms). As a fraction of GNP, the expenditure leaped from 5 percent in 1978 to 7.1 percent by 1990. In the same period, the PAF grew in size by an amazing 52.5 percent.

Qualitative Analysis

Offensive Capability

The PAF used the Reagan packages effectively with the aim of achieving both a balanced force level for defensive operations and offensive capability under different conditions and terrain. In the army, there was a definite thrust to improve the mechanized warfare capability, backed up by suitable electronic equipment. The acquisition of M48A5, M60 and additional T-59 tanks from the US and the PRC coupled with their indigenous modernization, enabled the army to raise an additional armored division. This enhanced its offensive capability.³⁹ The improved TOW vehicles and the AH-1 attack helicopters received from the US were integrated in seven ATGM (TOW) battalions and two Cobra missile companies. This considerably improved anti-tank capabilities. After receiving a hundred 155 mm self-propelled howitzers, the army raised additional artillery regiments. These regiments were grouped with the newly raised armored formations with a view to support deep thrusts by mechanized columns. The RBS-70 (Swedish) SAMs, paid for by

Saudi money, helped overcome the deficiency of an integrated air-defense system in the forward battle area.

The expansion and modernization of the navy covered all aspects required to enhance its surface, sub-surface and air capabilities. With some long-term and prudent thinking, combat vessels with improved weapons, communications and ECM/ESM systems were acquired. Mirage aircraft equipped to carry AM-39 missiles, air-submarine-ship launched Harpoon missiles, and the enhancement of underway electronic surveillance capability contributed to increasing the navy's offensive potential.

The airforce revamped its air-defense capability considerably. A-5 and Mirage-V aircraft were modernized to meet the requirement of close support, ground attack, and naval-support operations. The prize gain was, of course, the F-16 aircraft which incorporated many advanced technologies. Besides providing multi-role capability (so very important in a short war scenario), the F-16 aircraft with minor modifications was also able to deliver a nuclear weapon.⁴⁰ This provided an altogether dimension to PAF's offensive capability.

Choice of Weapons

Most critics of the Reagan Administration's military assistance and sales program for Pakistan understood the necessity of an unambiguous display of America's will to protect its interests in South West Asia and the Gulf. However, they were critical of the type of weapons chosen to bolster the PAF. Most of the systems were most likely to be used against India or Pakistan's "own citizens" rather than against the hypothetical Soviet-backed invading force from Afghanistan.⁴¹

Selig Harrison, senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, observed in Congressional testimony early in 1983:

"The public opinion would have been able to digest American sales to Pakistan of F-20 (F-5G) interceptors, light tanks, anti-aircraft guns, helicopters, and 105/120 mm howitzers, which would have a specific relevance to the mountainous Afghan frontier, as distinct from the equipment primarily meant to improve the balance of power with India, such as the F-16s, M-48/60 tanks, 155 mm howitzers, TOW missiles, and the Huey-Cobra helicopters designed for use against the tanks. It was not the fact of a post-Afghanistan US military package for Pakistan, but rather the character of the package that provided ammunition to the critics."⁴²

Military Balance With India

India had always held a quantitative military advantage over Pakistan. By the middle of the 1980s, the advantage seemed to be overwhelming. At this time, India enjoyed a lead in military manpower by 2.1:1, in divisions by 1.7:1, in tanks by 2:1, in major surface ships by 4:1, and in total combat aircraft by 2.9:1.⁴³ However, scrutinized more closely, the advantage was not so clear-cut. For one thing, thanks to the Western arms largesse as a result of the Afghanistan conflict, Pakistan had prudently supplied its navy and airforce with long-range, sea-skimming, and cost-effective anti-ship Exocet and Harpoon missiles. India's capital surface ships presented excellent targets for these weapon systems.

If a comparison were to be made in modern combat aircraft, India's number advantage came to a formidable 4 or 5 to 1. On the other hand, the combat effectiveness of the F-16s had been rated by Indian officials as 3 to 4 times greater than the nearest Indian equivalents--the MiGs and the Jaguars.⁴⁴ This was contrary to the deposition of the Under Secretary for Security Assistance in the Department of State, James Buckley. In a testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in November 1981, he contended that the military assistance levels and particularly sale of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan would not upset the overwhelming qualitative and quantitative superiority enjoyed

by India. He felt that F-16s provided the PAF only with a primary air-defense capability.⁴⁵

The sophisticated arms received in the eighties helped the PAF achieve a temporary parity, perhaps even a marginal edge over their Indian counterparts in certain categories of arms such as communications, electronic warfare, radar and anti-tank missiles. Also, the Afghanistan war brought Saudi Arabia and Pakistan close on security matters. The US had sold AWACS to Saudi Arabia in 1981 in order to strengthen it against any communist threat.⁴⁶ In case of a future Pakistan-India conflict, close Saudi-Pakistani military cooperation might have resulted in the AWACS being made available to the PAF.

Training And Combat Experience

CIA specialists supplied and trained PAF officers in the use of secure communications equipment, explosives and psychological warfare. In 1986, a Stinger training school was set up at Ojri Camp in Rawalpindi.⁴⁷ All this helped provide the junior leaders in the PAF a modern outlook to warfare.

The ISI offered training and tactical advice to the mujahideen. The agency sent its advisors and instructors into the combat zone in Afghanistan. The ISI operated seven training camps by 1987, four near Peshawar and three in the vicinity of Quetta, and trained some 80,000 Afghanistan fighters. Two ISI teams operated inside Afghanistan between May and October each year. PAF officers and NCOs comprising the teams were volunteers from all branches of the army. The ISI selected particular missions, determined the correct training and provided the required arms. A few ISI volunteers, disguised as mujahideen, accompanied the forces under an Afghan commander across the border mainly to strike at infrastructure targets.⁴⁸ The experience gained in organizing and executing these operations would stand the PAF in good

stead in the low intensity conflict environment, within the country and in South Asia.

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CHAPTER VII

NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY

The developments between 1979 and 1989 in the nuclear weapons arena in Pakistan were, almost exclusively, a US-Pakistan affair. The countries of West Europe played only a marginal role. The PRC entered the field quietly and played a vital role which did not come under much scrutiny until the end of the decade.

Limping Start

By the close of 1979, Pakistan was frustrated at the penalties imposed by President Carter's non-proliferation policies. These included influencing the French decision to back off from the nuclear processing plant deal. Zia publicly vented his frustrations at the aid cut-off issue. He declared:

"Pakistan would never compromise on its sovereignty. Our economic aid has been affected but we have absorbed its impact and the entire nation supports the government's stand. We shall lift our own burden. We shall eat crumbs but will not allow our national interest to be compromised in any manner whatsoever."¹

Privately, however, the President and his foreign affairs advisor Agha Shahi continued to work so that resolution of the nuclear impasse would result in restoration of the traditional relationship with the US. Agha Shahi undertook a visit to the US in October 1979 to "counter propaganda" against the "peaceful nuclear program." This was followed by a congressional delegation visiting Pakistan, but the deadlock continued.

Policies Of The Nuclear Regulatory Powers

Pre-1986 Shift

As mentioned earlier, the Carter Administration's perceptions changed dramatically following Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. A two pronged approach towards Pakistan was adopted. First, an aid package was put together along with a reaffirmation of US commitment to Pakistan's territorial integrity. Second, with regard to the impact of the proposed aid on Carter's non-proliferation policy, it was announced that the nuclear issue with Pakistan would not be put aside. However, it was only one of the several foreign policy issues. The aid to Pakistan was necessary, disagreements over the nuclear issue notwithstanding.²

There was a change of heart in Congress also. Senator Charles Percy, who had a major part to play in Senate in passing any aid bill to Pakistan, and Senator John Glenn, co-author of the Symington-Glenn Amendment and a hard-liner against Pakistan, echoed the changing sentiments. They acknowledged the need for the US to review various elements of its foreign policy and push aid to Pakistan. They felt that if Pakistan assured that it would not manufacture a nuclear weapon nor would it transfer sensitive nuclear technology elsewhere, the US could make exceptions to earlier policies. Peter Constable, senior deputy assistant secretary of state, bureau of near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (NEA), declared that in discussions with the US officials, Pakistan had offered both these assurances. Beyond this, the Administration expressed limitations of its ability to influence Pakistan's nuclear program.³

The US always walked a tightrope between balancing its actions towards India and Pakistan. Accordingly, the State Department, anticipating India's negative reaction to the administration's shift in

policy towards Pakistan, proceeded to soften the blow. It approved two pending Indian requests for shipment of enriched uranium for its Tarapur plant. This was despite the fact that a ban on nuclear fuels for India was to become effective in March 1980 for its refusal to accept full-scope safeguards. Pakistan was already unhappy at the two year grace allowed to India between 1978 and 1980 which had resulted in two large shipments in that period.⁴ It perceived the Carter Administration still practicing double standards despite the basic change in mood resulting from the Afghanistan crisis.

On taking over in January 1981, President Reagan made it clear that countering the Soviet threat in Afghanistan was to be given precedence over the non-proliferation goals in that region. This was despite Pakistan's refusal to give more than a token assurance of its commitment to non-proliferation. The Reagan Administration added a new element to the aid issue by arguing that strengthening PAF's conventional capability might also make most of its security concerns disappear and deter it from acquiring nuclear weapons.

The Reagan Administration drew a distinction, at that time, between "development" and "utilization" of nuclear weapons capability, between maintaining a nuclear option and actual manufacture of the weapons. So, in the face of mounting evidence of a nuclear weapons program, it conceded that Pakistan was engaged in nuclear weapons development. However, the officials insisted that they had been given convincing assurances by Pakistan that it would forgo the actual manufacture of these weapons. Congress accepted the distinction and consented to a temporary (six year) waiver of the anti-proliferation Section 669 (Symington Amendment). However, it stipulated termination of the aid in the event Pakistan was found to have received, transferred or exploded a nuclear device.⁵

The anti-proliferation champions in the US Congress were unhappy with the Administration's tolerance of Pakistan's blatant disregard of their concerns. They wanted additional legislation to enforce strict compliance. In March 1984, Senators Glenn and Cranston proposed an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act. The amendment made aid to Pakistan conditional as it required the president to certify that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear device, was not developing it, and was not acquiring, covertly or overtly, the technology, material or equipment intended for manufacture or detonation of such a device.

The Reagan Administration protested that such legislation would effectively prohibit any further security assistance to Pakistan. This would also hurt the cause of Afghanistan's resistance parties. As an accommodation, Senate adopted a less severely worded amendment proposed by Senators Pressler, Mathias and Percy. This amendment obliged the president to certify only that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear device and the proposed US assistance program would significantly reduce the likelihood that it would possess such a device in future. Also, in 1985, Congress adopted the Solarz Amendment barring aid to non nuclear-weapon countries that illegally exported nuclear commodities from the US for use in nuclear explosives.⁶

The phrase "Islamic Bomb" was sometimes offered as a substitute or alternate rationale in the world community for Pakistan's nuclear effort. Some critics in the US and other Western nations were convinced that Pakistan's pursuit of nuclear technology was actually fueled by the desire of rich but underdeveloped Arab countries to acquire nuclear weapons capability through a surrogate in order to achieve a balanced military equation with Israel.⁷ Ironically, this rhetoric only ended up contributing to solidify domestic support in Pakistan for its nuclear pursuits. At this stage, Zia was trying to usher in a phase of

religious re-awakening (Islamization drive). The impression that religion was somehow tied to nuclear efforts suited his interests in the Islamic world. So, he let the impression hang.

Post-1986 Developments

The distinction drawn by the Reagan Administration between development and utilization of nuclear capability, though sustainable in 1981, appeared very vulnerable towards the end of Soviet presence in Afghanistan. While congressional hearings on the proliferation problem were being held in March 1987, The New York Times in an editorial titled "Stop Pakistan's Nuclear Bomb" called for Congress to gamble on Pakistan's need for the US military and economic assistance. It called for a complete cut-off in aid if Pakistan failed to stop its nuclear program where it stood.⁸ There were increasing calls in the US that though an aid cut-off might endanger the anti-Soviet resistance in Afghanistan, the risk had to be taken.

Pakistan's nuclear weapons ambiguity kept increasing in the mid-eighties. As such, President Reagan found it difficult to certify to Pakistan's nuclear weapons innocence as required by the Pressler Amendment. The release of new aid in 1987, 88 and 89 was delayed to apply pressures on Pakistan to fall in line with non-proliferation policies and laws. The President confessed to strong reservations when he signed the certificate in December 1988.⁹

The US administration was convinced that the PRC collaborated with Pakistan's nuclear activities. Senator Glenn, speaking to the Senate on July 25, 1991, said "If China continues to pose a nuclear threat to India and to provide bomb technology to Pakistan, prospects for a regional regime will vanish."¹⁰ He was referring to the likely set back to the non-proliferation agenda in South Asia. Chinese activities included assistance to build (unsafeguarded) uranium

enrichment facilities, assistance in nuclear weapon design, possible sale of titanium, sale of M-9 and M-11 missiles, and assistance in developing "Hatf-I" and "Hatf-II" surface to surface missiles. The Hatf missiles could become possible delivery means for tactical nuclear weapons.¹¹

In order to project a clean image in the nuclear issue, Zia undertook a series of measures on the diplomatic front. In 1981, he offered the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, a proposal for mutual inspection of each other's nuclear installations. In 1985, a Pakistan proposal, described as a regional approach to non-proliferation, envisaged a declaration to be made by the countries of South Asia renouncing nuclear weapons. In her address to the joint session of the US Congress in June 1989, the new Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto offered to open Pakistan's nuclear installations for international inspection provided other countries in the region agreed to do the same.¹² This was done to maintain a picture of good intentions and strengthen the hands of the US Administration in pressing for aid to Pakistan. These diplomatic efforts helped President Reagan to continue giving annual certificates to the US Congress.

Success In Acquiring Material And Know-how

Soon after the cancellation of the French deal in 1978, Pakistan opted for the enriched uranium option in place of the plutonium one. This required concentration of U-235 molecules in the naturally occurring U-238 (abundantly available in Pakistan) to be upgraded from a low 0.711 percent to more than 90 percent of the former. Of the two major methods, laser and ultra-centrifuge enrichment, Pakistan opted for the latter. In pursuit of enriched uranium, it was reported to have acquired from Libya sizable quantity of "yellow cake"--the first stage of refining uranium. The material was sold to Libya by Niger during

1978-80, and Libya, which had not concluded a detailed safeguards agreement under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) being a non-signatory, transferred it to Pakistan.¹³

Pakistan also attempted to acquire in the early eighties technology for the further two stages. Equipment for the first stage of converting yellow cake to uranium hexafluoride was smuggled into Pakistan. Under a secret initiative called Project 706, the setting up of ultra centrifuges to convert uranium hexafluoride into enriched uranium was started at Kahuta. The technology for this operation had been smuggled out of the Netherlands by Dr A. Q. Khan in 1976. He had obtained blueprints of the URENCO gas centrifuge enrichment plant, and a list of a hundred odd sub-contractors in Europe who could provide the requisite assemblies. Pakistan was reported to have set up at least 1000 ultra centrifuges at Kahuta and used them to enrich the uranium to 93.5 percent.¹⁴

Chronology Of Success

Pakistan's nuclear scorecard of real or alleged developments between the years 1981 and 88 was compiled from a series of studies done during the eighties for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, by Leonard Spector. It was an amazing case of a series of international manipulations and meticulous schemes.

1981. The Western media reported that Pakistan was constructing a nuclear test site in the Baluchistan mountains and was secretly diverting plutonium-bearing spent fuel from the safeguarded KANUPP reactor in Karachi. A retired PAF army colonel was arrested while he was allegedly attempting to smuggle a shipment of zirconium metal, considered an essential component in the nuclear fuel fabrication process, to Pakistan through New York's Kennedy airport.¹⁵

1984. The PRC gave Pakistan technical advice on the uranium enrichment process and possibly the design for the weapon used in China's fourth nuclear test. Three Pakistanis were arrested and indicted in Houston, Texas for allegedly attempting to ship 50 high-speed electronic switches (Krytron), used to trigger nuclear weapons, out of the US. Dr A. Q. Khan, head of the enrichment program, stated in an interview that Pakistani scientists had managed for the first time to produce low-enriched uranium and if ordered to do so, could make a nuclear bomb.¹⁶

1985. Pakistan conducted a successful test of the non-nuclear triggering package for a nuclear weapon. Also, a report surfaced that Pakistan had attempted to purchase a US-manufactured flash X-ray machine used in nuclear weapons development programs.¹⁷

1986. Pakistan masterminded an operation to smuggle out of West Germany almost 2000 pounds of specially hardened "maraging" steel, a uranium centrifuge component. Pakistan also attempted to purchase several hundred tons of pure graphite used in the production of plutonium for weapons, at different locations in the US, Britain, France and West Germany. In addition, Pakistan purchased six flash X-ray machines from a Swedish firm. Around this time, US intelligence sources concluded that Pakistan had produced weapons grade uranium and might be able to produce the weapons in as little as two weeks.¹⁸

1987. General Zia and Dr Khan confirmed in separate interviews that Pakistan could fabricate nuclear weapons whenever it wanted. At the same time, a joint Swiss-West German investigation was launched into an alleged Pakistan-directed operation to smuggle out of Europe, specially manufactured equipment. This included large precision furnaces called "autoclaves" and blueprints for a second enrichment plant at Golra.

In the USA, a Pakistan-born Canadian, Arshad Pervez, was arrested for allegedly attempting to conspire with a retired PAF brigadier, to export illegally to Pakistan, the controlled metals beryllium and maraging-350 steel.¹⁹

1988. A report appeared in The New York Times that Pakistan had accumulated enough highly enriched uranium for four to six nuclear weapons, that it had fabricated virtually all essential components for these weapons, and that it could rapidly deploy them in any future conflict.²⁰

Impact Of Afghan War

In 1981, in return for US help in modernizing the PAF, Pakistan was advised to limit its pursuit of the nuclear weapons option to capability development only. A nuclear test would result in cut-off of American aid. By using vague terms like nuclear development and nuclear utilization, the US Administration chose to ignore the implications of Pakistan's nuclear program. The Reagan Administration concentrated on rolling back the Soviets with Pakistan's help and turned a blind eye towards the non-proliferation policy. It overlooked Pakistan's reticence over a firm commitment towards these goals.

The Administration's dilution of the non-proliferation goals gave Congress powerful ammunition in influencing the US-Pakistan security relationship. The difference in perception provided a stimulus for frequent congressional legislation during the eighties. The proposals tried to make Pakistan comply with US policy. This exposed major contradictions in US foreign policy priorities and highlighted the fragility of the relationship between the two nations. It was clear that the Afghanistan crisis had only temporarily cemented the cracks in this relationship. The US had chosen to tolerate Pakistan's violations

of its non-proliferation goals only to push arms to the mujahideen through Pakistan. Once the Soviets pulled out, Pakistan was likely to face full might of US pressures. This was vindicated in 1989 when President Bush refused to certify that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear weapon. In October 1990, the US invoked the Pressler Amendment and suspended all aid to Pakistan.

So long as Soviet threat remained in Afghanistan, the contradictions in US policy worked to Pakistan's advantage. Once the Reagan Administration had tied itself to the "arms to mujahideen through Pakistan" policy, it was poorly placed to control the consequences. US aid could not be effectively channeled to the Afghanistan resistance except via Pakistan. As long as the US attached importance to the struggle for Afghanistan, Pakistan could choose to show a certain indifference to the US anti-proliferation policies.

The USA was the world leader in setting standards for moralistic policies such as nuclear non-proliferation. When it stood paralyzed in face of conflicting foreign policy goals, it did not take long for the other Western nations (with a history of indifference to lofty ideas) to follow suit. It was, therefore, not surprising that the arrangement worked out by the US through the eighties showed little success in slowing Pakistan's nuclear march. The waiver provision in the Solarz Amendment of 1985 enabled the Reagan Administration to carry on with its aid program for Pakistan in spite of mounting evidence that Pakistan stood in gross violation of the non-proliferation laws. Congress was reluctant to precipitate a policy crisis over the issue so long as Pakistan was playing a vital role in promoting US interests in South West Asia. Selig Harrison, senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, remarked that the US was supplying a security screen behind which an unstable and revisionist Pakistan was freely

pursuing its nuclear ambitions, unmolested by its neighbor.²¹

Endnotes

¹Shirin Tahir Kheli, The United States and Pakistan (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), 135.

²ibid., 139.

³ibid., 140.

⁴ibid.

⁵Robert G Wirsing, Pakistan's Security Under Zia, 1977-1988 (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991), 109.

⁶Kanti P Bajpai and Stephen P. Cohen, South Asia After The Cold War (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1993), 185.

⁷Kheli, The United States and Pakistan, 144.

⁸Wirsing, Pakistan's Security Under Zia, 112.

⁹Bajpai and Cohen, After The Cold War, 210.

¹⁰ibid., 177.

¹¹ibid.

¹²ibid., 211.

¹³Leonard Spector, Nuclear Proliferation Today (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 86-87.

¹⁴Shrikant Paranjpe, US Non-proliferation Policy in Action: South Asia (1987), 73.

¹⁵Wirsing, Pakistan's Security Under Zia, 110.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷ibid.

¹⁸ibid.

¹⁹ibid.

²⁰ibid.

²¹Robert G. Wirsing, "Dilemmas in the US-Pakistan Security Relationship," Asian Affairs, An American Review (Summer 1984): 32.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the impact of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on the Pakistan Armed forces (PAF). It has first traced the efforts of the PAF, in the time period between Pakistan's independence and entry of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, to establish a prominent place in national politics and attain the status of a modern armed force with acquisition of high quality weapon systems (including nuclear weapons capability). Then a detail examination of the same issues has been carried out for the decade 1979-89 during which Pakistan chose to play a vital role in aiding and abetting the Afghanistan resistance fighters. Analysis at each stage brought out the degree of success achieved by the PAF in their efforts to emerge politically and militarily strong. This chapter will draw comparisons between the state of the PAF at the two different stages. It will also attempt to forecast the new direction that the PAF may take in dealing with the security challenges.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 became Pakistan's foremost regional security preoccupation of the 1980s. It sharply influenced Pakistan's domestic, regional and global policies. The Afghanistan war highlighted Pakistan's geo-political attachment to events in Central Asia. It also became a major source of inter state (Pakistan-India and Pakistan-Afghanistan) contention in South Asia.

Pakistan spent the decade at the center of regional and international spotlight, opposing the Soviets, supporting the mujahideen, and cultivating close economic and military ties with the

US. General Zia's policy of resisting Soviet occupation, promoting Afghanistan's cause in the international community and providing shelter to the refugees brought international recognition and badly needed aid for Pakistan. It ensured US support for Zia's military regime and enhanced his image as a peace-maker, a bulwark against Communism, and a protector of Islamic people in the Muslim world. The war, however, also underscored Pakistan's vulnerability to foreign influences.

Politics: Civil-Military Relations

Pakistan's national political dilemma has been that the soldiers view the decay of the domestic institutions and the civilian administration as the reason that they have been forced to enter politics and impose martial law. On the other hand, the civilian politicians have maintained that it is the military's repeated intervention which results in disability of the democratic institutions and processes.

The Afghanistan crisis provided Zia and his military regime an excellent opportunity to divert the focus of the nation's attention away from his authoritarian rule. It also enabled him to rally mass support for a long war of attrition which was projected as a crusade for the nation's survival. If Pakistan had not confronted the Soviets but recognized their control in Afghanistan in exchange for a guarantee of Pakistan's sovereignty, the mass agitation launched by the MRD in 1981 for return to a democratic rule and international concern for human rights (which seemed to somehow fade in wake of the new role assumed by Pakistan) would probably have ensured that Zia and the military had only a brief spell of political power.

The Islamic twist to the struggle (a holy war in support of the Muslim brethren) cloaked the military regime's mis-deeds. Few dared

challenge the regime for fear of being branded anti-national and anti-religion.

On the other side, events from 1981 until Zia's death clearly highlighted the importance of another force in the civil-military tussle in Pakistan's politics, the Pakistani people. The military regime virtually went unchallenged until about 1983-84 because by and large the people were behind Zia's Afghanistan policy. Majority did not share the PAF's perceptions of the extent of Soviet threat to their country. However, they were willing to make any sacrifice in what they considered to be a grand opportunity to make history.

Once the initial romantic appeal of the holy war started to wear off, the socio-ethnic problems created by the presence of Afghanistan's refugees increased and the same people became increasingly desirous of a change at the decision-making level. It was this yearning that forced Zia to call for national elections, first in 1985 and then in 1988. In the latter elections, the people demonstrated their will by opting for Benazir Bhutto's PPP which stood against everything that Zia had represented. The Afghanistan war established the people of Pakistan as the key to the civil-military struggle. Neither side could then afford to ignore the people. In the future, this will probably force the two power-centers to switch to a more subtle form of jockeying for power and necessitate a constant wooing of this big constituency.

The period of Zia's successor, General Aslam Beg, proved particularly tough for the elected governments of Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. During the Gulf war, Beg led political attacks which castigated Sharif's government for its "anti-Muslim" stance (opposing Iraq). Rumors of a Beg-led coup were widespread in June 1991. The PAF, though out of power, continued to hold veto power in politics, especially in matters related to national security. For example, the first delegation

of Pakistani officials to visit Afghanistan to discuss that country's reconstruction with the new interim government in Kabul was headed by Lieutenant General Javed Nasir, then chief of ISI.

The successors of General Beg, on the other hand, have not been tied to Islamic groups. They do not appear to have obvious political ambitions. This augurs well for continued civilian rule. It also appears to signal an increased influence exercised by a more liberal, modernist generation of military officers. This may further pave the way for the military leadership to pass from the hands of conservative brand of generals that Zia had brought along. Key figures in the military can be expected to moderate their direct involvement in politics. For the time being, an uneasy truce prevails between the PAF and the civilian rulers.

Notwithstanding a change of heart in the PAF leadership, Pakistan's shaky democratic institutions can still be undermined by slower economic growth as a result of the suspension of US aid and diminished international financial support for Afghanistan's refugees. Higher unemployment and stronger competition for scarce resources among the political and social groups in the country have already led to an increase in domestic violence. Despite its apparent distancing from active politics, the PAF's leadership may again decide that the only way to deal with civil disorder is by discrediting and ousting the elected government.

Conventional Military Capability

The PAF generals rejected the Carter offer of 1978 which consisted of a security guarantee and some arms. They referred to the inadequate quantity and poor quality of the arms offered. However, they jumped at the Reagan package which besides the tacit security umbrella

clause, contained a lot of high technology arms. This makes it evident that it was the sophisticated weapons that were the PAF's main goal and not superpower support.

Pakistan's leaders continued to reckon India by far the greatest threat. They played along with the US strategy to contain Soviet influence in South West Asia largely to get sophisticated weapons. This can also be gauged from the fact that from Pakistan's perspective, the entire Reagan package of 1981 seemed to revolve around the F-16 aircraft issue.

The US commitment to rid Afghanistan of Soviet forces gave the PAF an opportunity to modernize its antiquated hardware. The PAF wanted to acquire force-multiplier weapon systems to compensate for its quantitative inferiority vis-à-vis India. It hoped to increase the costs for the adversary in a potential future war. The Afghanistan conflict enabled the PAF to achieve technological sophistication in their planning, perspective and approach to warfare. This was due to their decade long involvement in a conflict which saw the use of some sophisticated weapons, and large-scale covert operations. These developments helped the force to transform itself into a modern fighting machine, at least in the regional context.

It was apparent at the time Washington formally restored its security partnership with Islamabad in 1981 that the relationship would labor under severe handicaps. The record of the USA's past association with Pakistan was far from stable. The two countries were fundamentally mis-matched and could only temporarily sweep under the carpet the many contentious issues between them. When the Soviet policy crumbled in Afghanistan, the basic reason for this axis disintegrated and the US arms sales to the PAF stopped. The fragility of this marriage of convenience was well understood by the PAF leaders. That is why Zia was

reluctant about Pakistan's whole-hearted participation and progress in the Geneva proximity talks. He foresaw that if an Afghanistan accord was signed and implemented, there would be little incentive for the US to extend military aid to Pakistan.

The PAF were struck by the capabilities of modern weapon systems like the F-16s. This increased their desire for more of the free technology from the US. Accordingly, they saw their best chance to acquire the AWACS while the Soviets were still in Afghanistan. Till the end, they kept pressing for this aircraft rather than accepting an alternative, lower-cost ground based radar system to deal with air violations from across the Afghanistan border.

It is also clear that in Pakistan, the agenda for defense procurement and expenditure will continue to be set by the PAF. The civilian government will not be allowed to assert itself in security issues especially as they relate to evaluation of threat and determining the required response. The PAF has appreciated the realities of post Cold War period. They have been largely left on their own to confront regional problems.

Following the late 1990 suspension of the US aid, the PAF was badly hit as it struggled for spare parts to maintain existing equipment and replace aging systems. This perhaps explains the renewed efforts made recently by the PAF to once again come into the international (Western) spotlight. The PAF is now the largest subscriber to the United Nations peace-keeping element across the globe. During the Gulf war, there were well over 100,000 Pakistani workers stranded in Iraq and Kuwait. As such, public opinion was divided on branding Iraq as the aggressor. Still, the PAF contributed a brigade-sized contingent to the multi-national force. The expectations of renewed US and Middle East arms aid cannot be ruled out as a strong motive for these actions. The

PAF leadership might have felt that if they cooperated militarily to further the international community's interests (particularly US and Western countries' policies), it might open the doors for renewed military aid.

Nuclear Direction

The PAF had a constant anxiety that despite all the acquisitions the conventional military balance with India was increasingly becoming unfavorable and that this trend was irreversible. Under these circumstances, nuclear weapons were seized upon as an equalizer and the best insurance against an Indian threat. Pakistan's threat perceptions seldom overlapped with those of its primary ally, the US. The PAF's decision-making elite had gradually adopted a go-it-alone mentality in regard to its basic defense priorities. This prompted them to exploit the golden opportunity the Afghanistan crisis offered them to accelerate their nuclear weapons program.

The USA's economic and military aid allowed Pakistan to devote greater resources towards its nuclear program. On the other hand, the Western world was paralyzed in the face of Pakistan's worldwide clandestine network of nuclear smuggling which proved phenomenally successful in acquiring critical nuclear material, equipment and know-how. The USA and other Western countries were aware of the pace of Pakistan's nuclear program all through the eighties. However, any retaliatory measures against Pakistan at that stage would have resulted in stopping the arms flow to the Afghanistan mujahideen. That would have been contrary to President Reagan's most important policy objective, to roll back Soviet march in South West Asia. As such, these countries had to turn a blind eye to Pakistan's nuclear program. This

included the US president certifying year after year that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear bomb (as required by the Pressler Amendment).

All through their quest for nuclear weapon capability, Pakistani officials indulged in selected leaks of their capability. This might have been to test the waters of international reaction or set the "deterrence against India" approach in motion. Nothing else can explain A. Q. Khan's open confession in 1987 of possessing a nuclear bomb when pressure in the US Congress was growing to halt Pakistan's nuclear program. Coming at a time when the Indian army was conducting a massive military exercise close to the Pakistan border, his revelations might have been intended to warn India of Pakistan's retaliatory potential.

Pakistan's nuclear program is under firm control of the PAF. Benazir Bhutto, in an NBC-TV interview in December 1992, stated that she was bypassed when the nuclear weapons were assembled in the Spring of 1990. As a policy, Pakistan has two options. First, it produces the bombs only if India does the same. This way, it will not be accused of raising the stakes. Otherwise, it can proceed to remove any ambiguity and openly declare its position. The deterrence impact will be immense and the Western world may have no option but to accord Pakistan a coveted status. For right now, Pakistan seems to have decided on deterrence by bluff or a bomb in the basement approach. This will leave its potential adversaries unsure of Pakistan's real nuclear weapons capability. As such, the ambiguity may itself act as a deterrence.

In the South Asian context, a possible Pakistani bomb provides an umbrella under which Pakistan can escalate the Kashmir issue with India. A Pakistani nuclear capability may paralyze not only the Indian nuclear decision but also its conventional forces. The PAF may even be tempted to launch a bold strike to capture Kashmir if it perceived the Indian leadership to be indecisive. In fact, India's caution is

currently in evidence. In 1965, when Pakistan sent infiltrators into Kashmir, India sent its army across the cease-fire line to destroy their assembly points. In 1990, when Pakistan once again carried out a massive infiltration of terrorists (trained in its territory), India tried to deal with them within its own borders. This led to a common feeling that without the consideration of Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability, there might have been another war in May 1990. A deterrence of sorts may be already operating between Pakistan and India.

Final Overview

The events of 1979-89 had a major impact on each facet of the PAF. These are also likely to influence the future developments. In national governance, the PAF has clearly established a permanent role in forming the policy in security-related issues (internal or external). However, their capacity to openly suppress democratic aspirations of the people and remove at will legitimate civilian governments may have been severely limited. The Afghanistan war threw Pakistan at the center-stage of global attention. This enabled the PAF to acquire large quantity of sophisticated weapon systems and transform itself into a modern force.

The study has shown that the Afghanistan war provided necessary impetus to Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. By the end of the war, the PAF had acquired the rudimentary capability of producing and delivering a tactical nuclear weapon. All in all, the Afghanistan war proved uniquely useful to the quantitative and qualitative capabilities of the PAF.

APPENDIX A
PAKISTAN: ARMS TRANSFER DELIVERIES
AND TOTAL TRADE: 1971-1990

<u>Year</u>	<u>Arms Imports</u>		<u>Total Imports</u>		<u>Arms/Total</u>
	<u>Million Dollars</u>		<u>Million dollars</u>		
	<u>Current</u>	<u>Constant</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Constant</u>	%
		<u>1991</u>		<u>1991</u>	
1971	110	213	666	1295	16.5
1973	130	239	971	1787	13.3
1974	100	169	1729	2927	5.7
1975	100	155	2158	3350	4.6
1976	190	279	2181	3204	8.7
1977	220	305	2446	3393	8.9
1978	210	271	3285	4243	6.3
1979	240	285	4056	4831	5.9
1980	380	415	5350	5849	7.1
1981	300	300	5523	5523	5.4
1982	440	415	5378	5072	8.1
1983	430	581	5329	7198	8.1
1984	625	808	5853	7568	10.7
1985	470	586	5890	7349	8.0
1986	310	377	5374	6529	5.8
1987	330	389	5822	6856	5.7

1988	360	408	6590	7472	5.5
1989	500	542	7143	7750	7.0
1990	600	624	7376	7672	8.1

Source: World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers Annual Report by
US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (1992).

APPENDIX B
PAKISTAN: MILITARY EXPENDITURE
AND GNP: 1971-1990

<u>Year</u>	<u>Military Expenditure</u>		<u>GNP</u>		<u>ME/GNP</u>	<u>Armed</u>
	<u>Million Dollars</u>		<u>Million Dollars</u>			<u>Forces</u>
	<u>Current</u>	<u>Constant</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Constant</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Thousands</u>
1972	612	1191	9150	17800	6.7	350
1973	685	1262	10393	19138	6.6	466
1974	672	1138	11880	20115	5.7	500
1975	816	1268	13399	20805	6.1	502
1976	893	1312	14892	21877	6.0	604
1977	861	1194	16428	22795	5.2	588
1978	1013	1309	19284	24914	5.3	518
1979	1092	1301	21866	26044	5.0	544
1980	Not available					
1981	873	1303	15810	23600	5.5	560
1982	1033	1452	17870	25110	5.8	588
1983	1349	1822	21730	29350	6.2	588
1984	1401	1812	23660	30600	5.9	588
1985	1650	2059	26070	32500	6.3	647
1986	1833	2227	28270	34350	6.5	645
1987	1989	2342	30640	36080	6.5	645
1988	2185	2477	33570	38070	6.5	645

1989	2387	2590	36870	40000	6.5	684
1990	2829	2943	40110	41710	7.1	790

Source: World Military Expenditure and Arms Transfers Annual Report by
US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (1992).

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